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**WESTERN PISTACHIO ASSOCIATION RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS  
REGARDING BAN ON IRANIAN PISTACHIOS**

**September 29, 2010 Fresno, CA** — Western Pistachio Association (WPA) today posted responses to questions regarding a ban on Iranian pistachios and its impact on the U.S. pistachio industry at [www.westernpistachio.org](http://www.westernpistachio.org). The *Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010*, signed by President Obama on July 1, 2010, became effective today. The Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Department of Treasury (OFAC) recently interpreted the Act's language as prohibiting the importation of Iranian-origin pistachios into the United States.

Quotes below are provided by Richard Matoian, WPA Executive Director.

**Q: What effect will the ban have on U.S. pistachio growers?**

A: "It presents an opportunity to increase market share in the U.S. We hope purchasers of foreign product will shift permanently to U.S.-grown once they've experienced the quality of our product."

**Q: How much product is imported from Iran into the U.S.?**

A: "An average of 262,000 pounds of Iranian pistachios has entered the U.S. each year since 2000, mainly kernels. However, we've seen an increase of nearly a million pounds in the latest twelve month reporting period."

**Q: How much do U.S. pistachio producers currently sell in the U.S.?**

A: "Approximately 130 million pounds are sold in the USA. 35 percent of our product is sold domestically, while 65 percent is exported."

**Q: Can U.S. pistachios supply the void left by Iranian imports?**

A: "Yes, and we'd like to supply the customers who've been purchasing from Iran. We're in the midst of harvest now and our growers are reporting larger sized nuts of outstanding quality. This may be related to the cooler temps we experienced this summer. We'll have an ample supply of superior nuts this year."

**Q: Assuming Iran ships to foreign markets, do you think that will affect pistachio prices in those markets?**

A: "The U.S. and Iran are the world's number one and number two producers, respectively. With one billion pounds being sold globally, we don't expect the U.S. ban on Iranian product will have much of an impact on pricing."

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**Q: Is this the first time Iran pistachios have been banned?**

A: "No. President Carter imposed an embargo on Iranian imports, brought on by the U.S. Embassy hostage situation in Tehran in November of 1979. That embargo was lifted in January 1981. In 1987, during the Iraq/Iran war, President Reagan imposed an embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), which lasted until 2000. In March 2000, the Clinton Administration lifted the embargo on certain products (including pistachios), believing progress was being made with the IRI leaders. Starting today with this new embargo, importation from Iran will cease."

**FACTS:**

99.99% of pistachios sold in the U.S. are grown in America, primarily in California and also Arizona and New Mexico.

California produces 98.5% of American pistachios, representing \$540 million to the California economy and they are ranked as the one of the largest agricultural export products for the state.

Today's pistachio market in the U.S. is estimated to be valued at \$700 million.

This year's crop has been officially estimated to produce 350 million pounds of pistachios.

*Western Pistachio Association is a grower-based agricultural trade association representing pistachio growers in California, Arizona and New Mexico. The organization works on issues vital to growers and activities that affect the U.S. Pistachio industry. Pistachio nutrition research and promotion of research findings are key activities conducted by the Association.*

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