

## AGRICULTURE WHITEBOARD

### **Coast Guard: Ag cargo weight measures comply with UN rule**

By **CATHERINE BOUDREAU**

Coast Guard Rear Adm. Paul Thomas has assured agricultural exporters that the current procedures for verifying cargo weight are compliant with an international maritime safety regulation that will take effect July 1.

The Agriculture Transportation Coalition said today that they received confirmation from Thomas that shippers can continue verifying the weight of the goods they own while steamship lines can remain responsible for reporting the weight of the containers they lease. Together, the measurements reflect the gross mass of packed containers required to safely load vessels and avoid dangerous overcapacity conditions.

The industry group, which represents companies like Tyson Foods and the Louis Dreyfus Group, told Thomas during a meeting last week that the United Nations International Maritime Organization's rule would create major delays and turmoil at U.S. ports.

The group interpreted the rule as requiring shippers to verify both the weight of cargo and containers and argued that shipping companies shouldn't be held liable for reporting the weight of containers they don't own. Thomas called the issue a misunderstanding in a recent blog post, adding that he's confident U.S. shippers and their business partners will put the right processes in place to continue safe and efficient maritime trade.

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