

October food-trade update: renew now, plan what changes next

FDA deadlines, new Kribi logistics capacity and freight signals: our interpretation for manufacturers and U.S. food importers.

Fabrice Abunde, PhD | Published and reviewed October 5, 2026

The priority: protect readiness before chasing a lower price

Two FDA timelines require different responses this month. Facility renewal needs attention now. The new international-mail data fields belong in the readiness checklist, with enforcement delayed. Treating both as an immediate shipment blocker would confuse the sourcing decision.

Our view: a commercially attractive product mix only works when the manufacturer, documentation and shipment can support entry into the U.S. A cheaper supplier or softer freight market cannot repair missing readiness after the container has loaded.

Three signals / Three different decisions

Facility renewal deadline - 31 Dec - 2026 · act now

Mail-field enforcement - 1 May - 2027 · prepare ahead

Global freight benchmark - -1% - 1 Oct · obtain lane quotes

The mail policy applies to food arriving by international mail. The freight signal is a global benchmark, not an Africa–U.S. rate.

1. International mail: retain the fields, distinguish the deadline

What changed

FDA's new prior-notice requirements for the mail-service name and international-mail tracking number took effect October 1, 2026. Its October guidance says it does not intend to enforce those requirements until May 1, 2027, while its submission systems are updated. FDA will reassess system readiness. [1]

Gloway's interpretation

This is a targeted enforcement policy for international mail, not a general relaxation of food-import requirements. It should not be presented as a new exemption for ocean containers or every courier shipment. Keep the two fields in the data model; separate their enforcement timing from other prior-notice and entry checks.

What to do

For an applicable mail shipment, collect the service name and tracking number where available. Record the policy and review date alongside the checklist. Do not label missing system support for these two fields as the sole reason to stop a shipment during the stated discretion period. Confirm all other applicable requirements and recheck FDA's position before May 2027.

2. Facility renewal: start with the suppliers in your next loading plan

What changed

FDA's September 29 reminder opens the biennial renewal period from October 1 through December 31, 2026 for facilities required to register. Failure to renew by the deadline causes registration to be treated as expired. Renewal is electronic through FDA Industry Systems unless a waiver applies, and FDA charges no registration or renewal fee. [2]

The reminder also calls for verification of the facility's DUNS identifier and address, and Qualified Facility Attestation during this period for facilities eligible for that status. Being a small manufacturer alone does not establish eligibility. [2]

Gloway's interpretation

Renewal should be part of supplier selection and shipment planning. Prioritize manufacturers supplying U.S. customers, facilities in an upcoming order and records with address inconsistencies. An unresolved renewal record creates uncertainty that a product price comparison can easily hide.

We also believe fees must be transparent. FDA renewal has no FDA fee. Any separately agreed Gloway support or U.S. Agent service fee must be identified as a service charge, never described as an FDA renewal charge.

A supplier record needs distinct checkpoints

Checkpoint / Evidence to retain

DUNS and address checked / Matching facility identity and address

Renewal submitted / Submission record and date

Renewal completed / Confirmation and current registration status

Attestation, if applicable / Eligibility review and completion record

Gloway's recommended tracking structure. Submission and completion should not be treated as the same event.

3. Kribi: new capacity is useful only when you can access it

What was reported

A September 21 report of Maersk's announcement describes a new 16,000-square-metre depot in Kribi with capacity for 1,500 TEU. Reported services include container storage, customs inspection and clearance support, reefer and food-grade equipment, empty returns and digital booking and tracking. [3]

Gloway's interpretation

For Cameroon-origin food sourcing, equipment access and coordination deserve as much attention as the ocean rate. The depot could improve the handoff between production, inspection and port delivery. That is a possibility to validate, not a cost saving to promise or evidence of a Gloway-Maersk partnership.

What to do

Before including the depot in a shipment plan, obtain written terms for food-grade or reefer availability, release and return procedures, storage charges, free time, inspection arrangements and tracking access. Ask who is responsible at each handoff. Maersk's Cameroon contact page provides a direct starting point for operational enquiries. [4]

4. Freight: negotiate with context, budget with an actual quotation

What changed

Drewry reported that its World Container Index fell 1% to \$4,434 per 40-foot container on October 1, 2026. [5]

Gloway's interpretation

A softer global indicator is useful negotiating context. It does not establish the price or reliability of a Kribi or Douala shipment to a U.S. warehouse. Replacing a route-specific assumption with the global index could make the projected business case look stronger than the available evidence supports.

What to do

Obtain comparable live quotations for the actual origin, destination, equipment and sailing period. Compare the ocean rate, origin and destination charges, equipment premiums, transshipment route, free time and expected door-to-warehouse timing. Record the quotation's validity date. Change customer pricing or expected margin only after the relevant costs have been checked.

Our operating priority: one reviewable shipment record

These developments reinforce Gloway's infrastructure thesis: supplier readiness, shipment execution and container economics should inform the same decision. A registration record in one spreadsheet and a freight quotation in another can leave the loading plan disconnected from the risks behind it.

For the next order, link the manufacturer and renewal status to the product lots, readiness documents, equipment booking, shipment milestones and warehouse delivery. Then compare planned landed cost and timing with actual results. This is Gloway's recommended operating approach, not a new FDA requirement.

Before the next container is approved

Confirm renewal status for each manufacturer in the proposed order.

Resolve DUNS and address inconsistencies; check attestation where applicable.

Keep the international-mail fields and their enforcement date in the appropriate checklist.

Validate Kribi equipment access and terms before assuming operational savings.

Refresh lane-specific freight quotations and the container business case.

Live watch: weather and carrier disruption alerts should be checked close to dispatch and arrival. This brief does not provide a storm all-clear. Use the [National Hurricane Center](#) and the carrier's current advisories when reviewing delivery commitments.

Sources and review notes

FDA: [enforcement policy for international-mail prior-notice fields](#) · October 2026 guidance.

FDA: [food-facility biennial renewal reminder](#) · September 29, 2026.

DataPortuaria: [report of Maersk's Kribi depot announcement](#) · September 21, 2026.

Maersk: [Cameroon local information and contacts](#).

Drewry: [World Container Index](#), October 1, 2026.

Reviewed October 5, 2026. Official FDA statements are distinguished from Gloway's commercial interpretation. Depot benefits require operational confirmation; benchmark freight is not a customer quotation.

Turn the update into a shipment plan.

Bring your product list, destination and target loading date. Start with the business case and the readiness checks behind it.