

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs  
4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1232 • Voice (301) 851-4100 • Web: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

---

Contact:  
Tanya Espinosa (301) 301-851-4092  
Lyndsay Cole (301) 538-9213

### **USDA Proposes Updates to Plant Import Regulations**

WASHINGTON, February 13, 2012--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to make several amendments to update and streamline its regulations involving the importation of plants for planting.

“The importation of plants from foreign countries has greatly increased in the past 20 years and some of the regulations have not been updated,” said Rebecca Bech, deputy administrator of APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine program. “These proposed changes are necessary to relieve certain restrictions, update existing provisions, and to make the regulations easier to understand and implement.”

Some of these proposed changes include requiring permits for the importation of certain coated or pelleted seeds, and providing for an alternate additional declaration on phytosanitary certificates that accompany plants from countries known to have potato cyst nematodes. The proposed regulations also change provisions specific to certain countries, to ensure they reflect the latest information regarding quarantine pests detected in various places. For example, they would add Turkey to the list of countries from which importation of certain plants is prohibited due to the presence of *Chrysanthemum white rust*; provide conditions for the importation of certain plants from Canada to address the presence of plum pox potyvirus in that country; and provide for the importation of carnations from the Netherlands.

These improvements will make the existing regulations current, provide a faster and simpler process for industry, and maintain the existing level of protections for U.S. agriculture.

This action was published in the Feb. 12 *Federal Register* at <http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2008-0071>.

APHIS is seeking public review and comments on this proposed rule. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before April 15, 2013. Comments may be submitted either by visiting the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2008-0071> or by postal mail/commercial delivery to: Docket No. APHIS-2011-0079, Regulatory Analysis and Development PPD APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD, 20737-1238.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov website and may also be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 799-7039.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to help safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America's agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

#

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet and through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds.

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).*