

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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**USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSAL TO RELIEVE CERTAIN
RESTRICTIONS ON THE MOVEMENT OF HASS AVOCADOS**

WASHINGTON, June 11, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is reopening the comment period on the proposed rule to eliminate *Anastrepha* spp. fruit fly trapping requirements for Hass avocados imported from Mexico. This rule also would allow Hass avocados to move interstate, under certain conditions, from areas in the United States that are quarantined for Mexican and sapote fruit flies.

APHIS is proposing this action as recently completed research found that unharvested Hass avocados are not a natural host to various species in the *Anastrepha* genus, which include Mexican and sapote fruit flies.

Based on these findings, APHIS proposes to remove the current trapping and bait spray requirements for Hass avocados from Mexico, because the restrictions are no longer necessary to safely import these products into the United States. However, APHIS still would require Mexican Hass avocados to meet post-harvest safeguarding and other existing import requirements prior to entry into the United States.

Under the proposed rule, U.S.-grown Hass avocados would be eligible to move interstate from areas quarantined for the Mexican fruit fly or sapote fruit fly provided certain conditions are met. The avocados would have to be harvested and protected from fruit fly infestations during movement from the orchard to the packinghouse. The avocados also would have to be accompanied by a field record indicating the location of the orchard where the fruit originated. These measures, among others, would protect uninfested areas of the United States from introductions of the Mexican or sapote fruit fly.

This proposal would harmonize the domestic and foreign requirements for moving Hass avocados and would relieve unnecessary restrictions for avocado producers. In addition, it would provide an alternative for Hass avocados to be moved interstate if they originate in a Mexican fruit fly or sapote fruit fly quarantined area of the United States.

This action will be published in the June 12 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before June 26. Send an original and two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2006-0189, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road,

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Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2006-0189>. Click on “Add Comments” to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., 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) 690-2817.

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