



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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AQIM Program Summary

Fiscal Year 2021

AQI MONITORING INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF PATHWAYS

Introduction:

The Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Monitoring (AQIM) Program consists of daily or weekly random sampling activities along several agricultural import pathways. The AQIM process uses proven statistical techniques to collect information about these pathways and the commodities entering through them into the United States. That information is then analyzed to assist in managing the potential risks these pathways and commodities present to U.S. agriculture (e.g., Quarantine Material Intercepted (QMIs), pests intercepted, or actions taken). This data can either validate known potential risk or help identify additional trends, patterns or areas of potential risk to U.S. agriculture. This data provides important information to support a port's agricultural risk-based decision making, improve their selection criteria and more efficiently better use of a port's current and future resources. The AQIM data is also used in the annual performance measures that USDA reports to Congress as required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), which requires all government programs to be managed based on results achieved.

AQIM Pathway Activities and Sampling Rates Summary:

PATHWAY	Num. of Ports Participating	Daily Samples Per Port	Weekly Samples Per Port	Monthly Samples Per Port	National Approach Rate (%)**
Air Passenger *	26	10	70	300	N/A
Preclearance (passenger) *	6	10	70	300	N/A
Predeparture (pax) PPQ *	7	10	70	300	9.74
Northern Border Vehicles * ♦	25	min. 10	min. 70	300	66.67
Southern Border Vehicles *	20	min. 10	min. 70	300	40.00
Mail **	6	10-15	-	275-300	1.88
Air Cargo:					
a. Perishable	13	-	2	8 – 10	7.70
Maritime Cargo:					
a. Perishable	8	-	2	8 – 10	5.43
b. WPM	19	-	2	8 – 10	3.74
c. Italian Tiles	7	-	2	8 – 10	6.08
d. Other	-	-	-	-	3.28
Northern Border Truck Cargo:					
a. Truck Cargo	6		6	min. 24 - 26	0.13
b. Reefer Container	Suspended until further notice				
Southern Border Truck Cargo ***	9		2-8	min. 8 – 32	0.23

* Minimum sampling is 10 per day, unless arranged differently by National AQIM Program Manager and CBP, Agriculture Programs and



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Trade Liaison (APTL) staff. The number of samples are determined “per port”, “per terminal” or “per crossing” depending on port location. N/A=not available. AQIM inspections in passengers' pathways were temporarily suspended since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a decrease in the passengers' volume.

** Samples per day or per week are dependent on days worked per week and non-work holidays.

*** Southern Border Truck Cargo sampling numbers depend on monthly “high” and “low” cargo volume seasons.

♦ Ports included under the Northern Border Vehicle pathway must review Table 4-6-2 in the AQIM Handbook.

** Approach rates were calculated with data from ARM and AQAS. Northern and Southern Border Vehicle pathways are among the pathways temporarily suspended since March 2020 and only 15 and 10 AQIM inspections were recorded respectively. Therefore, the calculated approach rates are suspicious and should not be considered descriptive of those two pathways.

Basic Components for a Successful AQIM Program:

- Proper execution of AQIM sampling, inspection, and data collection/entry procedures in accordance with established guidelines and using approved methods.
- Support from management and staff at all levels of the organization.

AQIM Data Collection Forms:

AQIM data collection forms are available for download and printing (PDF format) under each pathway section of the online AQIM handbook.

Help & Reference:

Most of the ports listed in the tables found later in this document have participated in AQIM activities in the past and have CBP Agriculture Specialists (CBPAS) or PPQ employees who are familiar with these AQIM activities. However, further assistance and information on AQIM can be obtained via the following sources:

The online AQIM Handbook located at:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/aqim_handbook.pdf

Contacting PPQ AQIM National Program Manager

Edna M. Cintron at (240) 454-1835 or by email: Edna.M.Cintron@usda.gov

For AQIM Program inquiries: QPAS-AQIM@usda.gov

Agricultural Risk Management System (ARM)

For assistance with the use of the ARM web-based system, contact the ARM Helpdesk at (877) 873-0783 or by email CEChelpdesk@usda.gov (include ARM in the email subject).

PPQ employees who are new users to the ARM system or are current users who requires additional ARM access, will need to fill out the **ARM Administration Form** and submit it via SharePoint to PPQ Quarantine Policy, Analysis, and Support (QPAS). This form can be found [here](#).

Suggested changes or revisions by CBP users regarding AQIM, should be forwarded to APTL AQIM Point of Contact Andrea Sinclair at aptlsida@cbp.dhs.gov. Notify Agriculture Programs and Trade Liaison (APTL) staff of any unusual circumstances that prevent normal AQIM sampling to take place like i.e., flight termination, flooding, weather issues, local port issues, strikes, etc.



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Changes and Reminders:

Listed below are changes and reminders regarding the AQIM activities.

Changes:

1. The AQIM Handbook content was revised and updated version was published by Manuals Unit. These updates include the elimination of the sections for the suspended pathways (Cruise Ship, Express Carrier, Plant Inspection Station, Rail Cargo, Southern Border Pedestrian).
2. The Quality Assurance Questions in Appendix E of the handbook were reviewed and reorganized in a more efficient manner. The rest of the worksheets will be revised and published during FY22.
3. The worksheets for the following pathways were revised and updated: Air Passenger, Preclearance, Mail Facility, Northern Border Vehicle and Southern Border Vehicle. The worksheets included changes like improved instructions to provide additional guidance when conducting the AQIM inspections (i.e., how to estimate articles weight, what units to use according to the article, etc.).
4. An inbox for receiving and processing inquiries related to the program was created. This has the purpose of enhancing communication with program stakeholders by creating an intake process for service requests. The email address for this inbox was included in Appendix B of handbook, under key contacts information.
5. AQIM inspections in pathways where passengers are randomly selected continued being temporary suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, except for AQIM Pre-Clearance in Freeport, Bahamas that was suspended until further notice due to the 2019 hurricane devastation. This suspension was extended until December 31st, 2021. Those pathways are:
 - Foreign Arrival Air Passenger Baggage
 - Preclearance Air Passenger
 - Northern Border Vehicles
 - Southern Border Vehicles
6. The list of CBP ports conducting AQIM activities was revised and updated in ARM and in the AQIM handbook.
7. COMPEX vehicle sampling protocol is no longer required to select AQIM samples for the Northern and Southern Border Vehicle Pathways. AQIM samples will be randomly selected by the CBPAS, which can be done by using a random time generator tool like in example Random.org.
8. There was a change in Maritime, Air Cargo and Northern and Southern Border Truck Cargo Pathways in terms of reporting data obtained from a randomly selected AQIM shipment that contain mixed multiple commodities. Now instead of two separate data entries for two inspections, it's one ARM report with two separate inspections.
9. In April 2021, the remainder of data reporting from AQIM activities moved from AQAS data base to ARM. Predeparture AQIM data was already being reported in ARM since 2019.
10. It was agreed with the Predeparture Cross Functional Working Group that only one worksheet will be used for Predeparture AQIM for consistency between Hawaii and Puerto Rico work units. Also, the worksheet will be aligned with ARM system data elements.



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Reminders:

1. AQIM forms are no longer Fiscal Year specific. The same forms will always be used, regardless of the year, unless revised or corrected. See lower right corner of online PDF forms for the most recent revision dates.
2. Air and maritime ports conducting AQIM monitoring for perishable commodities must include cut flowers in addition to the fresh fruits and vegetables in this perishable category. **Miami, FL is the only port exempted from including cut flowers.** Any other exceptions are to be arranged in coordination with APTL and the PPQ AQIM National Program Manager.
3. Northern Border Cargo Pathway - Bulk loaded loose perishable cargo (actual cargo commodity that is floor loaded on truck bed: no boxes, crates, cartons, bags, etc.) is exempt from the AQIM perishable sampling population.
4. AQIM Sampling activities were suspended since September 2018 in the following Southern Land Border ports to perform the Risk Based Sampling test protocol (Pharr, Laredo, Nogales, San Luis, Calexico, Otay Mesa). It will remain like this until further notice.

AQI Monitoring Activities for Non-Cargo Pathways

1. Air Passenger Pathways (US Foreign Arrival, Preclearance, and Predeparture):

- A sampling protocol of 300 Customs Declarations (including all passengers associated with these declarations) per month is needed at most airports. Since Customs Declarations (CBP 6059B form), are currently done orally, in paper or electronic; sampling procedures (logistics of where to sample, etc.) should accommodate this change. Must ensure that samples are taken from the entire passenger population.

NOTE: Smaller to medium size airports will do a minimum sampling protocol of only 150 Customs Declarations per month (5 per day) or less. All other airports, assuming a 7-day work week, will follow the sampling protocol:

- Properly select 10 samples per day per airport or terminal. **Some airports with multiple terminals will do either 5 or 10 samples per terminal.** Contact PPQ AQIM Program for specific sampling numbers per terminal.
- Apply appropriate AQIM inspection procedures for each sample, 100% hand inspection of all carry-on and checked baggage is required.
- Record all data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data in ARM.
- Predeparture activities are performed by USDA PPQ. These activities are not conducted by CBP.

2. Border Vehicle Pathway (Southern and Northern Border Staffed Crossings):

- Conduct a sampling protocol of randomly selecting a **minimum** of 10 vehicles per day per staffed border crossing. Select these samples from the entire non-commercial vehicle population approaching the crossing. A random time generator tool (in example Random.org) can be used for this purpose. This random sampling procedure is to be part of your Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for ready access and application. Sample amounts are “per port” or “per crossing”, depending on the port location. This is to occur at ports having one or more full time



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CBPAS and during CBPAS duty hours. **AQIM samples should continue to be collected under Code Orange or higher alerts.**

- Use 7-point inspection procedures on all vehicles and 100% inspection procedures on all passenger baggage and personal effects.
- Follow this sampling protocol assuming a 7-day work week.
- Record all needed data on appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

If a port location has only one CBPAS, then 5-10 vehicles samples per day (as a basic rule) are to be taken based on days the port is staffed. However, locations with a single CBPAS inspector are encouraged to sample more than the minimum of 5 vehicles per day when possible. Ports with the Northern Border Vehicle pathway should review the AQIM Handbook for further sampling details.

3. Mail Pathway (US Postal Service air / surface):

- A sampling protocol of 300 mail packages per month from all mail packages (excluding obvious book/magazine bundles or packages) is required. Months with non-work holidays will affect this number.
- Follow Current sampling protocol and depending on actual workdays per week, properly select:
 - if work 5 days per week select 14 mail package samples per day
 - if work 6 days per week select 12 mail package samples per day
 - if work 7 days per week select 10 mail package samples per day
- Apply appropriate AQIM inspection procedures for each sample.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

AQI Monitoring Activities for Commercial Cargo Pathways

NOTE: Ensure you follow inspection procedures for a randomly selected AQIM shipment that contain **mixed multiple commodities** from the same country and/or different countries in the air, maritime and land border cargo pathways. Review the appropriate section of the AQIM Handbook for more information and details on inspecting these types of shipments.

The following cargo categories are to be monitored in the respective pathways:

1. Air Cargo:

This pathway's cargo category is **perishable agricultural cargo**, defined as fresh fruits, vegetables or cut flowers. It's important to remember that Miami, FL is the only port exempted from including cut flowers.

A sampling protocol of 2 to 4 samples taken from a minimum of two different Air Waybills (AWBs) per week per airport that can sustain this sampling. This excludes seed shipments, pre-cleared cargo, National Agriculture Release Program (NARP) cargo, Transportation and Exportation (T&E) shipments, frozen commodities and mandatory treatment cargo. Any deviation from these minimum



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sample numbers must be arranged and authorized by CBP APTL and PPQ National AQIM Coordinator.

Do the following:

- Inspect cargo using appropriate AQIM hypergeometric inspection procedures for each sample. See AQIM Handbook for details on hypergeometric inspection procedures.
- If the shipment consists of clam shell packaging or smaller film wrapped retail packaging or trays in boxes, then consider total number of clam shells, trays, etc. for inspection purposes.
- Required 100% inspection of each box, carton, clam shell, tray etc., chosen from cargo shipment.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

2. Land Border Cargo:

a. Southern Border Truck:

This pathway's cargo category is **commercial plant perishable commodities and products**. A sampling protocol of 6 to 12 inspections taken from a minimum of 6 trucks per week per port that receives this category of cargo needs to be followed. Up to 2 AQIM commodities/inspections may occur per truck. Exclude seed shipments, pre-cleared cargo, National Agriculture Release Program cargo, Transportation and Exportation shipments, frozen commodities and mandatory treatment cargo.

If a port has distinguishable high and low volume seasons of different perishable cargo commodities, then adjust sampling during these periods as follows:

High Volume Period: 8 samples per week

Low Volume Period: 2 samples per week

NOTE: Port will need to first determine what periods of time during the year are of high and/or low volumes.

The information above is to be used for periods of time when the commodities in this category have distinct volume differences. If this is not the case, then apply the following sampling protocol:

- Inspect cargo using appropriate AQIM hypergeometric inspection procedures for each sample.
- If the shipment consists of smaller retail units like clam shell packaging, smaller film wrapped retail packaging or trays in boxes, then consider total number of clam shells, trays, etc., to determine the appropriate number to inspect.
- Required 100% inspection of each box, carton, clam shell, tray, retail unit, etc., chosen from cargo shipment.
- Record all needed data on appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

b. Northern Border:

Truck Cargo: This pathway's cargo category is **commercial plant perishable commodities and products, even if stated as Canadian origin**. A sampling protocol of 6 to 12 inspections



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taken from a minimum of 6 trucks per week per port is required. Up to 2 AQIM commodities/inspections may occur per truck. Exclude seed shipments, pre-cleared cargo, National Agriculture Release Program cargo, Transportation and Exportation shipments, frozen commodities, mandatory treatment cargo and loose bulk loaded perishable cargo (actual cargo commodity that is floor loaded on truck bed, no boxes, crates, cartons, bags, etc., used for containment of commodity). Do the following:

- Inspect cargo using appropriate AQIM hypergeometric inspection procedures for each sample.
- If the shipment consists of smaller retail units like clam shell packaging or smaller film wrapped retail packaging or trays in boxes, then consider total number of clam shells, trays, etc., for the appropriate number to inspect.
- Required 100% inspection of each box, carton, clam shell, tray etc., chosen from cargo shipment.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

Reefer Containers: AQIM monitoring for reefer containers in Northern Border is suspended until further notice.

3. **Maritime Cargo:**

The following commodities or commodity types are excluded from this pathway sampling universe: seed shipments, pre-cleared cargo, National Agriculture Release Program cargo, Transportation and Exportation shipments, frozen commodities and mandatory treatment cargo.

a. **Perishable Agricultural Cargo:**

This pathway's cargo category is defined as fresh fruits, vegetables or cut flowers. A sampling protocol of 2 containers (or container equivalent) inspections per week per port needs to be followed. Do the following:

- Inspect cargo using appropriate AQIM hypergeometric inspection procedures for each sample.
- If the shipment consists of smaller retail units like clam shell packaging, smaller film wrapped retail packaging or trays in boxes, then consider total number of clam shells, trays, etc., to determine the appropriate number to inspect.
- Required 100% inspection of each box, carton, clam shell, tray etc., chosen from cargo shipment.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

b. **Wood Packing Material (WPM):**

A sampling protocol of 2 containers per week per port that can sustain this sampling is required.

- When inspecting cargo with WPM associated with it, assure to inspect as much WPM as the cargo allows. Partial or full de-vanning may be necessary based on situation and judgment of the CBPAS.
- If the cargo sample does not have WPM associated with it then skip this sample and



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perform an AQIM inspection on the next random sample of cargo that is usually known to have WPM associated with it.

- Do not use a perishable or Italian tile cargo sample for the WPM sampling when the port is assigned to do one or both sample categories.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

c. Italian Tile Container Cargo:

A sampling protocol of 2 containers per week per port is needed, taking in consideration the tile seasonality.

- Inspection of cargo and associated WPM as cargo allows. Partial or full de-vanning may be necessary based on situation and judgment of CBPAS.
- Record all needed data on the appropriate AQIM data worksheet and report data using ARM.

ACRONYMS:

APTL - Agriculture Programs and Trade Liaison

AQAS - Agricultural Quarantine Activity System

AQIM - Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Monitoring

ARM - Agricultural Risk Management System

BRASS - Border Release Advanced Screening and Selectivity

CBP - Customs and Border Protection

CBPAS - CBP Agriculture Specialist

COMPEX - CBP's Random Compliance Examination

GPRA - Government Performance and Results Act

NARP - National Agriculture Release Program

PPQ - Plant Protection and Quarantine

QMI - Quarantine Material Intercepted

RBS - Risk Based Sampling

T&E - Transportation and Exportation

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture



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Ports Participating in AQIM Activities by Pathway

("X" marks AQIM participation)

Port Name	Air Passenger	Cargo				Mail
		Air	Maritime			
		Perishable	Perishable	WPM	Italian Tile	
AZ Phoenix	X					
CA Long Beach			X	X		
CA Los Angeles	X	X				X
CA Oakland				X		
CA San Francisco	X	X				X
CO Denver	X					
DE Wilmington			X			
FL Cape Canaveral						
FL Ft. Lauderdale	X					
FL Miami	X	X	X	X	X	X
FL Orlando	X					
FL Port Everglades			X	X	X	
FL Sanford	X					
FL Tampa	X					
FL West Palm Beach				X		
GA Atlanta	X	X				
GA Savannah				X	X	
HI Honolulu	X	X		X		
IL Chicago	X	X				X
LA New Orleans				X		
MA Boston	X	X		X		
MD Baltimore	X			X	X	
MI Romulus	X					
MN Minneapolis	X					
MS Gulfport				X		
NC Charlotte	X					
NJ Newark	X	X	X	X	X	X
NY Brooklyn			X	X		
NY Jamaica	X	X				X
PA Philadelphia	X		X	X		
PR San Juan	X	X		X		
SC Charleston				X		
TX Dallas	X	X				
TX Houston	X	X	X		X	
TX San Antonio	X					
VA Dulles	X	X				
VA Norfolk				X	X	
WA Seattle (Air)	X					



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Port Name	Air Passenger	Cargo				Mail
		Air		Maritime		
		Perishable	Perishable	WPM	Italian Tile	
WA Seattle (Maritime)				X		
WA Tacoma				X		

Passenger Preclearance	
Port Name	Country
Aruba	Aruba
Freeport	Bahamas*
Nassau	Bahamas
Bermuda	Bermuda
Montreal	Canada
Toronto	Canada
Vancouver	Canada

* suspended until further notice since 2019 due to hurricane devastation

Southern Border*			
Port Name	Vehicle	Truck Cargo	Pedestrian (Suspended)
AZ Douglas	X		X
AZ Nogales**	X	X	X
AZ San Luis**	X	X	X
CA Calexico West	X		X
CA Calexico East**	X	X	
CA Otay Mesa**	X	X	X
CA San Ysidro	X		X
CA Tecate	X		X
NM Columbus	X		
NM Santa Teresa	X		
TX Anzalduas	X		
TX Brownsville	X	X	X
TX Eagle Pass	X		
TX El Paso	X	X	X
TX Hidalgo	X		X
TX Laredo**	X	X	X
TX Los Indios	X	X	
TX Pharr**	X	X	



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Southern Border*			
Port Name	Vehicle	Truck Cargo	Pedestrian (Suspended)
TX Progreso	X		
TX Ysleta	X		

*Including border crossings that fall under these locations' jurisdiction.

** Suspended until further notice because of the RBS test protocol.

Northern Border*		
Port Name	Vehicle	Truck Cargo
ID Eastport	X	
ID Porthill	X	
ME Calais	X	
ME Houlton	X	
ME Jackman	X	
ME Van Buren	X	
MI Detroit	X	X
MI Port Huron	X	X
MN Grand Portage	X	
MN International Falls	X	
MT Raymond	X	
MT Roosevelt	X	
MT Sweetgrass	X	
ND Dunseith	X	
ND Pembina	X	
ND Portal	X	
NY Alexandria Bay	X	X
NY Buffalo	X	X
NY Champlain	X	X
VT Derby Line	X	
VT Highgate Springs	X	
WA Blaine	X	X
WA Lynden	X	
WA Oroville	X	
WA Sumas	X	

*Including border crossings that fall under these locations' jurisdiction.



Predeparture
Port Name
HI Honolulu
HI Kahului
HI Kona
HI Lihue
PR Aguadilla
PR Carolina
PR Ponce

AQIM Program Quality Assurance:

The following questions serve as guidance to ensure the AQIM Program’s quality assurance.

1. AQIM Sampling and Monitoring

- What has been done to ensure that the samples are as random as possible?
- Is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for AQIM developed, updated, and available to employees?
- What is being done to limit bias?
- What difficulties are encountered in ensuring randomness?
- How are these difficulties being dealt with?
- How are samples selected so that they are proportional to the approaching population?
- What is done to ensure that all of the appropriate population (i.e., passengers, vehicles or cargo) have a chance to be selected?
- What system is used to select times for selecting samples?
- How is timing of sample selection adjusted so busy times have proportionally more samples?
- What aspects of monitoring have been the most difficult to implement? What has been done to improve the situation?
- What changes have been made in daily operations as a result of monitoring?

2. Inspections, QMIs, and Pest Interceptions

- What is done to ensure that all samples are properly inspected (100 percent inspection of non-cargo baggage/mail; ensuring hypergeometric cargo inspection process is used where applicable)?
- How are AQIM QMIs separated and marked?



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- How are QMIs inspected for pests?
- If pests are found, what system is in place to ensure the pest interception number from the PPQ Form 309 or the ARM Diagnostic Request event is entered as part of the monitoring record?
- How often is contraband fruit inspected for pests?
- Is all the contraband 100% inspected for multiple pests?

3. Data Review

- Are current data worksheets being used and instructions followed?
- Who coordinates and ensures completeness and accuracy of AQIM data collection?
- How is consistency ensured?
- Is the data entry up to date?
- How often is data quality assurance done?
- What does the available gap analysis information show about AQIM and port operations?
- How reasonable are the initial results?
- What is the port doing with the information?