

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2014-03
January 9, 2014

Subject: APHIS Amends New Requirements for fresh blueberry fruit (*Vaccinium* spp.) imported from Chile into the United States.

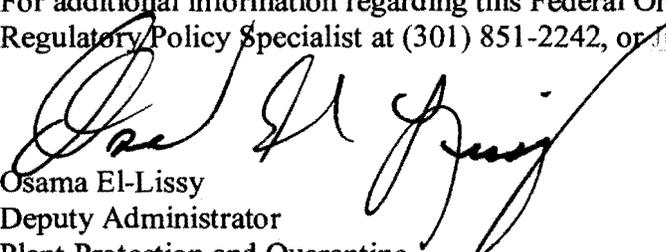
To: State and Territory Agricultural Regulatory Officials

Effective immediately, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending the entry requirements for the importation of fresh blueberry fruit (*Vaccinium* spp.) from Chile into the United States. APHIS is taking this action in response to a request submitted by Chile's Servicio Agrícola Ganadero (SAG) to amend a previous Federal Order issued on December 24, 2013.

To prevent the introduction of European Grapevine Moth (*Lobesia botrana*, EGVM) into the United States, APHIS is requiring blueberry shipments from regions VI, VII, and VIII destined to the United States to be fumigated with methyl bromide at the point of origin or at the first U.S. port of arrival under Title 7 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 305. In addition consignments not requiring fumigation, specifically shipments from regions other than VI, VII, and VIII, will be subjected to an increased rate of inspection, through the APHIS preclearance program, at the port of export.

APHIS scientists determined that Chilean blueberries arriving at the port of entry under cold storage and treated with methyl bromide at a rate of 4 lbs at 40 °F for 3 hours will effectively mitigate EGVM. Therefore, APHIS has decided to permit Chilean blueberries to be fumigated at U.S. ports of Elizabeth, NJ, Long Beach, CA, Miami, FL, Wilmington, DE and Philadelphia, PA utilizing either the 2 lb rate (at 60 or 70 degrees), in accordance with the methyl bromide label, or, the 4 lb rate (at 40 degrees). Because of the substantial growth of the EGVM population in Chile during recent seasons and its unexpected detection on fresh blueberry, APHIS has determined that these additional requirements are necessary to prevent the entry of EGVM into the United States following the fresh blueberry pathway.

For additional information regarding this Federal Order, please contact Tony Román, Senior Regulatory Policy Specialist at (301) 851-2242, or Juan.A.Roman@aphis.usda.gov.



Osama El-Lissy
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Attachment: Federal Order

FEDERAL ORDER

Importations of Blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.) from Chile
January 9, 2014

This Federal Order is issued pursuant to the authority provided by the Plant Protection Act (PPA) of June 20, 2000, as amended, Section 412(a), 7 U.S.C. 7712(a), which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to prohibit or restrict the importation, entry, exportation, or movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant product, biological control organism, noxious weed, article, or means of conveyance, if the Secretary determines that the prohibition or restriction is necessary to prevent the introduction into the United States or the dissemination of a plant pest or noxious weed within the United States.

The purpose of this Federal Order (FO) is to amend the previous FO issued by APHIS on December 24, 2013 requiring fresh blueberry consignments from regions VI, VII, and VIII in Chile and destined to the United States, to be fumigated with methyl bromide (MB) at the point of origin in accordance with Title 7 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 305. This is to prevent the introduction of the harmful plant pest, European Grapevine Moth (*Lobesia botrana*, EGVM) through fresh blueberry fruit consignments from Chile into the United States.

APHIS still considers that fresh blueberry consignments destined for the United States from Chile pose a significant phytosanitary risk to the United States domestic grape industry; due to the large populations of EGVM in Chile's production areas in regions VI, VII, and VIII.

In the previous FO, APHIS required blueberries from the above-mentioned regions to be fumigated with MB at the port of origin, using a treatment rate of 2 lb/1000 cubic feet for 3 ½ hours. APHIS required that the temperature of the blueberries for this treatment schedule must be 70 degrees Fahrenheit or above for tarpaulin fumigations, or, 60 degrees Fahrenheit or above for chamber fumigation at normal atmospheric pressure.

On December 30, 2013, Chile's Servicio Agrícola Ganadero (SAG) informed APHIS that the infrastructure necessary to perform high-volume MB fumigations did not exist in their country. They requested to have fresh blueberry consignments fumigated under the same treatment schedule, but at U.S. ports of entry.

In addition, SAG requested APHIS allow the blueberries to be treated at 4 lb/1000 cubic feet for 3 hours at the port of entry. This treatment schedule, which is similar to the one required by APHIS to target EGVM in grapes, would allow blueberries to be treated at the much lower temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit. According to SAG, this treatment would preserve the marketability and quality of the fruit.

APHIS scientists determined that Chilean blueberries arriving at the port of entry under cold storage and treated at a rate of 4 lbs at 40 °F for 3 hours will effectively mitigate EGVM. Therefore, APHIS has decided to permit Chilean blueberries to be fumigated at U.S. ports of entry using either the 2 lb rate (at 60 or 70 degrees), in accordance with the methyl bromide label, or, the 4 lb rate (at 40 degrees).

The APHIS Administrator has determined that by amending this FO and allowing MB fumigation under regulations codified in Title 7 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 305, will preserve phytosanitary security when importing blueberries from Chile to the United States.

EGVM was detected in Chile in April of 2008 on grapes. This pest, a European tortricid, attacks primarily grape flowers and fruit. Damage caused by the pest can be extensive; some growers reported losses of 70% of their grape crops in 2008. The populations of EGVM have increased substantially in Chile over the last two growing seasons. For the 2011- 2012 season, a total of 42,254 moths were captured in traps, while records for the 2012-2013 season show a total of 212,218 captures. For the ongoing 2013-2014 season, a total of 146,710 captures have been recorded for the first flight of the moth during the early part of the season.

Fresh blueberries have been allowed into the United States from Chile since 1983. Consignments may or may not be precleared. Currently, most consignments are inspected at the port of export, with APHIS - SAG supervision, under a pre-clearance agreement between Chile and the United States. Until the December 2012 detections, blueberry was not considered a host of EGVM. Because of the recent detections of EGVM on Chilean blueberries and the recent increase of EGVM trapped in regions VI, VII and VIII, APHIS now considers fresh blueberry fruit to be a host of EGVM. APHIS is very concerned about the high population levels of EGVM in Chile when combined with the polyphagous nature of this pest.

Due to the substantial recent pest population growth, the numerous interceptions and the pest risk described above, APHIS has determined that additional entry requirements are immediately necessary for the import of blueberries from Chile into the United States to prevent the entry and/or the dissemination of EGVM via the Chilean fresh blueberry pathway. Therefore, effective immediately, all fresh blueberry consignments from Chile must be:

- Subjected to an increase inspection rate of the pre-clearance program at the port of export for consignments not requiring fumigation;
- Fumigated with methyl bromide (MB) in Chile or upon arrival at the ports of entry of Elizabeth, NJ, Long Beach, CA, Miami, FL, Wilmington, DE and Philadelphia, PA as per 7 CFR 305 if consignments originate from regions VI, VII and VIII

This action is necessary because the APHIS Administrator has determined that the introduction and establishment of EGVM poses a serious threat to agriculture including certain fruits or vegetables grown in the United States. These restrictions to prevent the introduction and establishment of EGVM are immediately needed and warranted to address plant pest risks associated with currently admissible fresh blueberry fruit, and are in effect for the 2014 shipping season. After the Chilean shipping season ends, APHIS will re-assess and reconsider the conditions for subsequent seasons.

For additional information regarding this Federal Order, please contact Tony Román, Senior Regulatory Policy Specialist at (301) 851-2242, or via email at Juan.A.Roman@aphis.usda.gov