

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION

DA-2020-19

September 15, 2020

Subject: APHIS Amends Import Requirements for Fresh Fig (*Ficus carica*) Fruit from Mexico

To: State and Territory Agricultural Regulatory Officials

Effective immediately, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is implementing restrictions on all commercial consignments of fresh fig fruits (*Ficus carica*) imported into the United States from Mexico to prevent the introduction of Mediterranean black fig fly (MBFF) (*Silba adipata* McAlpine) into the United States.

APHIS is amending import requirements to require fresh fig fruit consignments from areas where MBFF is present in Mexico to be treated with 400 gy irradiation as a pest risk mitigation measure. Fresh fig production areas in Mexico where MBFF is not present will continue to be treated with 150 gy irradiation to mitigate for fruit flies (*Anastrepha* spp., Tephritidae), but will now require a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) with an additional declaration (AD) stating the fruit was produced in an area free of MBFF. For fresh fig fruit currently produced in the Fruit Fly Free Area (*Anastrepha* spp., Tephritidae) in Mexico, consignments must include a PC issued by Mexico's national plant protection organization with an AD that the consignment was produced in an area free of MBFF.

APHIS is taking this action in response to detections of MBFF in figs from the state of Morelos, Mexico. Under this Federal Order, fresh fig fruit from areas where MBFF is present must be treated using 400 gy irradiation, which is an APHIS approved treatment for all insects except adults and pupae of Lepidoptera.

Currently, fresh fig fruit from Mexico are enterable in commercial consignments into the United States with irradiation at 150 gy for Tephritidae fruit flies, or with a PC with an AD that they came from a pest free area for fruit flies. Due to the pest risk, APHIS has determined that these additional import requirements are immediately necessary to prevent the introduction of MBFF into the United States through the pathway of fresh fig fruit. Fresh fig fruit brought in by passengers and in non-commercial consignments is prohibited.

For additional information regarding this Federal Order, please contact Senior Regulatory Policy Specialist Marc Phillips at 301-851-2114, or [Marc.Phillips@usda.gov](mailto:Marc.Phillips@usda.gov).

/s/

Osama El Lissy  
Deputy Administrator  
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Attachment: Federal Order

**United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine**

**FEDERAL ORDER**

**Import Restrictions on Fig (*Ficus carica*) Fruit from Mediterranean Black Fig Fly  
Quarantine Areas in Mexico**

DA-2020-19

Effective immediately, this federal order revises import requirements for fresh fig fruit (*Ficus carica* L.) imported from Mexico to prevent the introduction of Mediterranean black fig fly (MBFF) (*Silba adipata* McAlpine) by imposing treatment requirements from MBFF infested areas and requiring an additional declaration from areas free of MBFF.

This Federal Order is issued in accordance with the regulatory authority provided by the Plant Protection Act of June 20, 2000, as amended, Section 412(a), 7 U.S.C. 7712(a). The Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to prohibit or restrict the movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant part, or article if the Secretary determines the prohibition or restriction is necessary to prevent the dissemination of a plant pest within the United States. The regulatory authority provided by 7 U.S.C. 7754 allows the Secretary to issue orders to carry out this provision of the Plant Protection Act. This Federal Order is also issued pursuant to the regulations promulgated under the Plant Protection Act and found in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations at Title 7 CFR Part 319.

The APHIS Administrator has determined that the introduction and establishment of MBFF poses a serious threat to United States agriculture including fresh fig fruits grown in the United States. APHIS has determined that additional import requirements for fresh fig fruit from Mexico are necessary to prevent the introduction and establishment of MBFF in the United States. These restrictions are immediately needed and warranted to address plant pest risks associated with the importation of fresh figs from Mexico.

In March 2020, the Mexican government notified APHIS of MBFF detections in the state of Morelos. MBFF is a lance fly species (Lonchaeidae) which attacks only figs, but is considered one of the most important and destructive pests of figs. MBFF is distributed throughout the Mediterranean region and the Middle East and has been introduced to South Africa. MBFF is not known to occur in the United States. APHIS has determined that this species would be able to establish in fig growing areas of the United States.

Currently, all commercial shipments of fresh fig fruit from Mexico are enterable into the continental United States with irradiation at 150 gy for Tephritidae fruit flies, or with a phytosanitary certificate with an additional declaration that they were produced in a pest free area for fruit flies.

### Requirements for Fresh Fig Fruit

To prevent the introduction of MBFF into the United States via fresh fig fruit, only commercial consignments of fresh fig fruit may be imported from Mexico.

Commercial consignments of fresh fig fruit from Morelos, and any other areas in Mexico quarantined for MBFF, will require mandatory irradiation treatment at 400 gy, in accordance with Title 7 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 305.

In areas in Mexico not quarantined for MBFF, fresh fig consignments must have either:

- a phytosanitary certificate with an additional declaration that the figs were produced in an area free from MBFF and a second additional declaration that the figs were produced in pest free area for fruit flies (*Anastrepha* spp., Tephritidae); or
- a phytosanitary certificate with an additional declaration that the figs were produced in an area free from MBFF and treated with 150gy for entry into the United States; or
- the consignment is treated with 400 gy irradiation for entry to the United States

Irradiation treatment can occur in Mexico under an APHIS preclearance program, or upon-arrival in the United States at an APHIS-approved irradiation facility under a compliance agreement.

For additional information regarding this Federal Order, please contact Senior Regulatory Policy Specialist Marc Phillips at 301-851-2114, or [Marc.Phillips@usda.gov](mailto:Marc.Phillips@usda.gov).