



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Encourages Summer Travelers to Protect American Agriculture by Not Packing a Pest

WASHINGTON, June 14, 2012—Whether you're studying abroad in Europe, traveling on business in Asia, or taking that dream vacation to Hawaii, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is urging summer travelers to join us in the fight against invasive pests by not packing a pest.

While agricultural products make tempting souvenirs, invasive pests can hitchhike on fruits, vegetables, meats, processed foods, plants, and handicraft items. If these invasive pests were to become established in the United States, they could devastate urban and rural landscapes and cost billions of dollars in lost revenue and eradication efforts. As a result, APHIS restricts or prohibits the entry of certain agricultural products from foreign countries and from Hawaii and U.S. territories.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers or agriculture specialists with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will inspect your baggage when you first arrive in the United States to ensure that the agricultural items you are carrying are allowable under APHIS regulations. Be sure to declare all agricultural items to CBP officers or CBP agriculture specialists at the first port of entry. Failure to declare food products can result in fines and penalties.

The following food items are generally allowed entry, but should still be declared and presented to a CBP agriculture specialist or CBP officer for inspection:

- Condiments such as oil, vinegar, mustard, catsup, pickles, syrup, honey without honey combs, jelly, and jam
- Foodstuffs such as bakery items, candy, and chocolate
- Hard cured cheeses without meat, such as parmesan or cheddar
- Canned goods and goods in vacuum packed jars (other than those containing meat or poultry products, and those containing certain dairy products) for personal use
- Fish or fish products for personal use
- Powdered drinks sealed in original containers with ingredients listed in English.

- Dry mixes containing dairy and egg ingredients (such as baking mixes, cocoa mixes, drink mixes, instant cake mixes, instant pudding mixes, liquid drink mixes containing reconstituted dry milk or dry milk products, potato flakes, and infant formula) that are commercially labeled, presented in final finished packaging, and require no further manipulation of the product are generally allowed.

You may also be allowed to bring back certain fresh fruits and vegetables, animal products and by-products, plants and plant parts for planting, cut flowers, firewood, or miscellaneous agricultural products, depending on the item and its country of origin. APHIS encourages travelers to be aware of restrictions pertaining to agricultural products before leaving the United States and to use these as guidelines when purchasing souvenirs. For comprehensive information on importing agricultural items for personal use, visit APHIS' Agricultural Information for International Travelers Web page at www.aphis.usda.gov/travel.

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 safeguard the nation's \$157 billion 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.

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