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Commodity Import Approval Process

Last Modified:

Learn how a new plant commodity, including a fruit, vegetable, plant, or plant product, is authorized for import into the United States.

How To Request Access to U.S. Markets

Are you looking to import a fruit, vegetable, plant, or plant product into the United States? Check to see if the plant commodity is authorized for import. If not, you'll need to make a commodity import request, as outlined below:

1. Verify whether the commodity is authorized by the United States.
    - Search the Plant Health Commodity Trade Manuals and the Agricultural Commodity Import Requirements (ACIR) database.
2. If it is not authorized or not currently undergoing a pest risk analysis, submit a commodity import request.
    - Contact the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of the country from which the commodity would be exported.
    - The NPPO must submit the information listed in 7 CFR 319.5(d) to APHIS at the address listed in the regulations.

What To Expect After Submitting a Request

Upon receipt of a completed request, APHIS will conduct a pest risk analysis and an environmental review to determine:

- If potential pests are likely to remain on the plant during importation
- How APHIS can avoid, reduce, or eliminate the risk of pest introduction into the United States (a mitigation plan).

After the pest risk analyses and environmental review, we will conduct risk analyses per International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 11, "Pest Risk Analysis for Quarantine Pests," and its supplements, set by the International Plant Protection Convention. Here's an Imported Plant Commodity Pest Risk Assessment Framework (847.38 KB), so you can get a better look.

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Drafting a Risk Assessment

- APHIS prepares a draft risk assessment or pest list based on the information provided by the NPPO and other available scientific and technical information. Subject matter experts, producers, academics, and scientists in the United States and other countries may be consulted during this process.
- The time needed to draft a risk assessment may vary due to a variety of circumstances such as the topic's complexity, access to information and number of stakeholders who need to be consulted.

Reviewing a Risk Assessment

When we complete a draft risk assessment or plant pest list, it undergoes internal agency review. We may make changes to the risk assessment or pest list based on this internal review.

Stakeholder Consultation

- APHIS posts the draft risk assessments or pest lists for plant and plant product commodity import requests at Stakeholder Risk Assessment Consultation for a 30-day stakeholder review period.
- Then, the documents go to a formal country consultation process, in which APHIS asks an exporting country for input on the U.S. assessment and proposed mitigations.
- Once the NPPO sends feedback and later approves our risk assessment or pest list and mitigation options, we will prepare the risk management document.

Are You a Stakeholder?

To participate in the stakeholder consultation process, visit Commenting Opportunities: Facilitating Safe Agricultural Trade or subscribe to our email updates and select the following topics:

- “Importation into the United States”
- “Risk Analyses and Assessments (PRA)”

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Risk Management Document

After completing both stakeholder and country consultations, APHIS will draft a risk management document. This document describes specific measures to mitigate the risk posed by each pest listed and prevent the introduction and establishment of the pest(s) in the United States. For each measure, we indicate the reason it was selected and give evidence that it is effective and supported by scientific and technical information.

Regulatory Process

After completing the risk analysis process, APHIS initiates the regulatory administrative process (rulemaking). This process begins when we publish an initial

notice or proposed rule in the Federal Register to announce that a risk assessment, pest list, risk management document, and supporting environmental documentation are available for public comment. We use notices for fruits and vegetables and plants for planting. We publish proposed rules for all other plants and plant products.

The effective date of the final notice or rule is the date the commodity is authorized for importation into the United States under the described phytosanitary import requirements. Please note that the country of origin may need to meet or establish certain requirements before we allow imports of that commodity into the United States. Until such requirements are established, the commodity will not be allowed entry.

Have a question about an importing issue?

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