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APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine Postpones Policy Update to Import Earthworms into the United States Until October

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Beginning October 1, 2022, APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) will require all stakeholders who import earthworm species into the United States to request and obtain a PPQ 526 pest permit and to comply with rearing and shipping requirements. APHIS is extending the implementation date to give stakeholders more time to apply for permits and prepare for the change.

This new policy applies to all earthworm species from all countries and will help to prevent the introduction and spread of potentially harmful pests and plant and animal pathogens transmitted from imported earthworms. PPQ will issue import permits for earthworms for environmental release in the United States only from countries that are free from foot-and mouth disease.

Importers of the earthworm species *Lumbricus terrestris* (the common name is nightcrawler) from Canada should note that PPQ will issue import permits for these species if the earthworms originate and are collected in Canada. Some import requirements may apply. Importers will need to register on the ePermits site to complete the application.

APHIS encourages stakeholders to register for ePermits prior to October 1, 2022, and submit their applications as soon as possible; visit [permits](#) for registration details. To apply for a PPQ 526 permit and learn about earthworm rearing and shipping requirements, visit [APHIS' Earthworms website](#).

For more information, please send an email to APHIS at pest.permits@usda.gov.