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APHIS Opens Ecuador Market for U.S. Rice

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On October 5, Ecuador opened its domestic market for U.S.-origin rough rice, allowing for a potential \$155 million annual market for American rice producers. This decision followed consultations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and industry officials.

Ecuador's national plant protection organization, Agencia Ecuatoriana de Aseguramiento de la Calidad del Agro (AGROCALIDAD), established interim entry requirements that are effective for U.S.-origin rough rice (*Oryza sativa* L.). These interim requirements followed a successful site visit by AGROCALIDAD to U.S. rice production regions and a site visit closeout conference that included APHIS and AGROCALIDAD. The U.S. Rice Producers Association sponsored the visit with APHIS' involvement.

APHIS has notified U.S. industry and updated requirements in the Phytosanitary Export Database system on October 24 to allow shipments to initiate under the interim conditions that Ecuador set; importers have already arranged purchases under these terms. A pest risk assessment is pending by AGROCALIDAD, after which they will make a final decision on requirements.

This project, which was initiated in July 2023, led to a fast-track interim access with AGROCALIDAD's support—a trade win for both countries.

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