

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2009-53
October 22, 2009

SUBJECT: Publication of Final Rule on Movement of Fresh Fruit from Areas Quarantined For Citrus Canker

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On Thursday, October 22, 2009, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published a final rule amending the conditions under which fresh citrus fruit may be moved interstate from areas within the United States quarantined for Asian citrus canker commonly referred to as citrus canker (CC). The amended regulations can be found in 7 CFR 301.75-1, 301.75-4, and 301.75-7. This information is available on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0023>. Currently, Florida is the only state quarantined due to the presence of CC.

CC is a bacterial disease that can infect leaves, twigs, and fruit of virtually all citrus species. Previous quarantine requirements had prohibited the interstate movement of fruit from quarantined areas if there was any evidence of CC infection on the fruit, and in the case of fruit found free of CC had restricted the interstate movement of fruit only to non-citrus producing states. Fruit was also required to be treated with a decontamination solution and to be packed free from leaves and stems. The revised regulations will eliminate the requirement that fruit be inspected and found free from signs of CC, and that fruit not be moved to citrus producing states. The requirements for treatment and freedom from leaves and stems are retained.

These changes were made based on APHIS' analysis of recent research, which concluded that there is now greater certainty that the risk associated with the spread of CC through the movement of symptomatic fruit is not significant. This will benefit the Florida citrus industry by opening up domestic markets, as well as reducing the need to inspect fruit that does not present a significant risk of spreading CC. A full discussion of how the results of this research justify the changes in regulations is presented in the proposal for changing the citrus fruit rule published on June 29, 2009. The proposal provided for a 60 day comment period, during which 34 comments were received. The proposal and all comments can be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0023>. The final rule will be effective on publication in the Federal Register.

As a condition of moving fruit interstate, fruit must be packed in commercial citrus packing houses operating under compliance agreement with APHIS. APHIS inspectors will continue to monitor packing houses to insure that the conditions in the compliance agreements are fully satisfied. For additional information regarding the publication of the final rule regarding the

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movement of fresh fruit from areas quarantined for citrus canker, you may contact Stephen Poe, National Program Manager, for Citrus Diseases, at Area Code (301) 734-8899.

/s/ Carlos F. Martinez /for
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Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Attachment:

Final Rule on Movement of Fresh Fruit from Areas Quarantined For Citrus Canker