

FOR INFORMATION

DA- 2005-21

June 24, 2005

SUBJECT: Regulatory Response to Detections of False Codling Moth (FCM) by California Inspectors in South African Citrus

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On June 16, 2005, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) inspectors found 1 live and 1 dead larvae on a shipment of South African clementines at the California border station in Needles. The larvae were identified by both a CDFA lab and the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) Specialist as False Codling Moth (FCM), *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*, Meyrick. The fruit had entered the US in the port of Philadelphia (PA) off the vessel Nova Zembla. Initial review of the cold treatment records did not reveal failures in the treatment.

On June 20, a second live larva was intercepted on a separate shipment of South African clementines in California. This shipment came on the vessel Fuji Star on June 14, 2005. This larva was identified by CDFA as FCM.

The fruit from both vessels had undergone the following phytosanitary measures:

- Pre-inspection in South Africa under USDA supervision to ensure it was not infested above a set tolerance for FCM
- Pre-cooled under South African supervision to 31° F
- Cold treated in transit under USDA guidelines for 22 days at 31° F
- Inspected on arrival by Customs and Border Protection. A total of 750 fruit were inspected and cut from the Nova Zembla and 910 fruit from the Fuji Star. No live or dead larvae were detected.

In response to the CDFA detections, a market place survey of fruit from the two ships was conducted by APHIS and various States. No live larvae were found. In addition, a “pause” was instituted by USDA on further loading of citrus in South Africa. Emergency Action Notifications were issued and fruit from the infested lots in California was destroyed.

A third vessel, the Mulungisi arrived in Philadelphia on June 23. APHIS instituted an elevated inspection level to ensure a 95% confidence of detecting a 1.0% infestation in the cold treated fruit. On that day APHIS’ Center for Plant Health, Science and Technology (CPHST) issued a recommendation that the treatment schedule for FCM be adjusted to 24 days at 31° F with mandatory precooling, supervised by USDA.

Based on best information available, APHIS is taking the following actions:

- A. For the fruit from the Nova Zembla and Fuji Star, already in United States commerce: Extensive inspection and market sampling does not indicate a programmatic breakdown.
- Continue marketplace sampling to determine if live larvae are present
- B. For fruit off the Mulungisi, dockside in the Port of Philadelphia, which successfully completed cold treatment:
- Continue inspecting and fruit cutting at an elevated level
 - Hold fruit dockside until all compartments are inspected.
 - Release, if no live larvae are found
 - Advise importers to check with State Departments of Agriculture in citrus growing States about special concerns.
- C. For fruit on three vessels currently on the water.
- Require either a 25 day cold treatment at 31° F, OR, if precooling records can be adequately verified by USDA inspectors in South Africa, require a 24 day cold treatment
 - Continue to inspect and cut fruit at the elevated rates, upon arrival in the United States
- D. For future shipments from South Africa
- Mandatory precooling to 31° F, supervised by USDA
 - Revised tolerance for FCM, prior to cold treatment
 - 24 day in transit cold treatment
 - Monitoring inspection and cutting upon arrival in the US by CBP and/or APHIS

Please advise consumers who contact you on this issue, to immediately report any live insects they detect associated with South African citrus to State or APHIS offices. A stakeholder announcement will be available early next week on the APHIS website. We welcome cooperation and communication with State Plant Regulatory Officials on this issue.



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