

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2011- 55
September 29, 2011

SUBJECT: APHIS Reclassifies Panicle Rice Mite, *Steneotarsonemus spinki*

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is reclassifying panicle rice mite, *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, (PRM) to a non-quarantine pest. Effective November 1, APHIS is rescinding Federal Order DA-2008-29, issued on July 11, 2008, which prohibited the movement of rice plants and plant parts including untreated rice seed from Puerto Rico. APHIS is maintaining all other entry requirements for rice seed imported into the United States for planting and/or research as described in 7 CFR 319.55.

APHIS' decision to reclassify PRM is based on a reevaluation of the regulatory program, outreach activities conducted with the rice-producing states, and scientific literature indicating that PRM has not caused economic damage in temperate rice-growing regions similar to the United States.

Should PRM be detected in the United States, APHIS will not conduct survey, regulatory, and control activities. The rice industry and research community, however, may choose to implement the regulatory and post-treatment protocols developed in the program as part of their overall best management practices. APHIS will retain the regulatory protocols and the manual for at least one year on the plant pest web page for referral by industry and the research community. This information can be found at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/rice_mite/index.shtml

To ensure a smooth transition, APHIS will conduct quarterly teleconference calls with research, extension, and industry representatives from the rice-producing states during the first year after deregulation. This will assist in identifying research needs and progress in support of the rice industry.

For further information about this decision, you may contact Andrea Simao, National Program Manager, at (301) 734-0930.

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