



Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Plant Protection and  
Quarantine

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March 9, 2020

Ms. Julie C. Van Meter  
President, National Plant Board  
c/o Bureau of Plant Industry  
Nebraska Department of Agriculture  
PO Box 94756  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4756

Dear Ms. Van Meter,

Thank you for your letter of August 29, 2019, regarding quarantine-significant pests on propagative plant material imported from Canada. Plants for planting imported into the United States, regardless of port of entry, are subject to the requirements of the plants for planting regulation (7 CFR 319 Subpart H). Shipments of plants for planting with pests must remain on hold at the port location or in the vicinity of the port in Canada while Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) processes intercepted pests for identification.

The 2017 incident in which Customs and Border Protection (CBP) port officials released plant material with a quarantine significant flower thrips interception was an error. APHIS has clarified its hold policy for infested plants in the Manual for Agricultural Clearance as well as its job aids used by CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists. APHIS updated its guidance with additional direction that clarifies that CBP Officers are to hold and safeguard any shipment pending identification by PPQ. We would encourage you to reach out to the State Plant Health Director's office for any similar occurrences. Your information sharing will continue to help us to improve any of our shortcomings and guidance provided to CBP officers.

Regarding recent *Phytophthora ramorum* (*P. ramorum*) detections, APHIS has worked closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) since April to trace the source of these detections and prevent the spread of this pathogen within the United States. APHIS has also initiated a bilateral technical working group with CFIA to learn from our respective management practices and improve the management of *P. ramorum* in North America. We expect that Canada will take further actions following the programmatic review of their *P. ramorum* management practices in 2020. Pending information provided by Canada, APHIS may consider restricting importation of *P. ramorum* hosts until Canada fully resolves the issue and demonstrates effective mitigation measures.

We thank you for bringing up issues of importance to the National Plant Board and want to assure you that we are working to provide strong oversight of the importation of plants for planting.

Sincerely,

Osama El-Lissy  
Deputy Administrator  
Plant Protection and Quarantine