

July 6, 2009

SUBJECT: Outbreak of *Anastrepha grandis* (South American cucurbit fruit fly) in Panama

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On May 19, 2009, the Republic of Panama announced to its regional plant health organization, Organizacion Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria, the detection of *Anastrepha grandis*, the South American cucurbit fruit fly, in Darien and eastern Panama Provinces. *A. grandis* is considered a pest of quarantine significance by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and is known to infest cucurbits. Panama is a major producer and exporter of cucurbits, exporting about 4,000,000 lbs of squash, 2,200,000 lbs of watermelon, 1,700,000 lbs of cantaloupe and honeydew, and 42,000 lbs of cucumbers to the United States since January 2008. Almost all cucurbit production in Panama is located west of the Panama Canal, while all detections of *A. grandis* have been east of the canal. In response to Panama's detection of *A. grandis*, APHIS has increased sampling and cutting of cucurbit fruits from Panama upon arrival in the United States.

Panama's Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) has established a quarantine, which prohibits the movement of cucurbit fruits from eastern Panama and Darien Provinces. All westbound vehicles are stopped at an established checkpoint and no cucurbit fruits are allowed past the checkpoint. Panama also regulates coastwise vessel movement from Darien and eastern Panama Provinces. In addition, MIDA has increased fruit fly traps and began applications of Spinosad (Naturlyte) bait sprays by backpack sprayers to properties within 500 meters of positive capture sites at 10 day intervals.

During the week of June 15, an APHIS official visited the outbreak sites to evaluate Panama's surveillance and eradication efforts. Based on that visit, APHIS is confident that the existing surveillance programs in Panama are sufficient to restrict movement of cucurbits to production areas in western Panama. Therefore, APHIS determined that it was unnecessary to prohibit importations from western Panama at this time. Should trapping records or fruit sampling and cutting indicate continued westward movement of *A. grandis*, APHIS will adopt appropriate measures on imports of cucurbits from Panama.

APHIS continues to cooperate with Panama to control the outbreak of *A. grandis* and is recommending the formation of a Science Advisory Panel consisting of recognized experts in management of *Anastrepha spp.* fruit flies to evaluate the situation and recommend appropriate control and eradication measures.

For additional information about the surveillance program in Panama, you may contact Wilmer Snell, Trade Director, at (301) 734-7639 or by email at [Wilmer.E.Snell@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Wilmer.E.Snell@aphis.usda.gov)

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