

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2007-59
November 16, 2007

SUBJECT: Publication of a final rule amending the Citrus Canker Regulations on the Interstate Movement of Citrus Fruit

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

The Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is publishing a final rule amending its citrus canker regulations to eliminate the pre-harvest grove inspection for all Florida citrus moving interstate. Instead, the amended regulations will require samples of each lot of citrus at the packinghouse to be inspected to effectively mitigate the risk of fruit showing signs of disease being moved interstate. This rule will be published in the November 19, 2007, Federal Register and was placed on public display today at the Office of the Federal Register in Washington, D.C.

Under the conditions set out in the final rule, Florida citrus destined for non-citrus-producing States must be treated and inspected at an approved packinghouse, found free of visible citrus canker symptoms, and properly packaged. Sampling and inspection of fruit will be carried out by APHIS inspectors and must be conducted at a level that will insure that any visible signs of infection, at levels of 0.38 percent or higher, will be detected at least 95 percent of the time. To further protect citrus-producing States from any potential risk of disease, APHIS will continue to prohibit Florida citrus from being shipped to citrus-producing States and Territories. Fruit eligible for interstate movement must be moved under limited permit and fruit containers must be clearly marked to indicate that the fruit can not be distributed to the specified citrus-producing States and Territories.

APHIS based its decision in making this change on the findings of a pest risk analysis as well as a subsequent risk management analysis. The pest risk analysis concluded that the risk associated with the interstate movement from quarantined areas of citrus fruit that is free of citrus canker lesions is insignificant. The risk management analysis concluded that a mandatory packinghouse inspection of commercially-packed fruit provides an effective safeguard to prevent the spread of citrus canker from quarantined areas. Additionally, APHIS encouraged the public to participate in the decision making process by providing feedback through the submission of public comments. The public comment period on the proposed rule, issued on June 21, 2007, closed on August 7, 2007.

This final rule replaces an interim rule, published August 1, 2006, that required all Florida citrus fruit destined for non-citrus-producing States to originate in groves that were inspected and found free of citrus canker no more than 30 days prior to harvest. Under the previous regulations, APHIS officials conducted packinghouse inspections as an additional safeguard to ensure that fruit shipments leaving Florida were canker-free.

The final rule becomes effective upon publication on November 19, 2007. A preview copy of the final rule is available for viewing at www.aphis.usda.gov. For additional information, you may contact Stephen Poe, Senior Staff Officer, at (301) 734-8899.

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