

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2007-20
June 21, 2007

SUBJECT: Interstate Movement of Citrus Fruit from Florida

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On June 21, 2007, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* on the establishment of packinghouse processing and inspection protocols to allow the interstate movement of fresh citrus fruit from citrus canker quarantined areas. Because it has become increasingly difficult for the State's citrus fruit growers to meet the disease-free grove conditions currently required for interstate movement of citrus fruit, APHIS has evaluated other protocols for the safe movement of citrus fruit.

The proposed rule, if finalized, will allow fresh citrus fruit that has been treated, inspected, found free of symptoms of citrus canker, and packaged in accordance with the proposed regulations in a packinghouse that is operating under an APHIS compliance agreement to move interstate to only non-citrus-producing States. Packinghouse operations will have to carry out protocol treatments during processing and accommodate onsite APHIS inspection activities. This proposal will allow Florida growers to continue to ship their fresh citrus to 45 non-citrus-producing States while protecting other citrus-producing States against the spread of citrus canker. If finalized, the proposal would also eliminate current grove inspection requirements for the interstate movement of fresh citrus fruit. APHIS intends to have a final rule in place in time for the 2007-2008 citrus fruit shipping season.

A link to a copy of the proposed rule and associated documentation is available on APHIS' Web site. The address is <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>. APHIS will be accepting comments on the proposed rule during a 30-day public comment period, which closes on July 23, 2007. Comments can be submitted or viewed electronically by going to www.epa.gov/feddoCKET. Once you have reached this page, click on the "View Open APHIS Dockets" link to locate this docket.

Citrus canker is present in Florida and the entire State is under Federal quarantine.

For more information about Federal citrus canker regulations, you may contact Patrick Gomes, National Citrus Health Response Program Coordinator, at (919) 855-7300.

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