

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1232 • Voice (301) 734-7799 • Web: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

Melissa O'Dell (301) 734-5222

Angel Harless (202) 720-4623

Correction: (The second paragraph is corrected to show that a systems approach currently is used to manage pests in clementines, mandarins and tangerines imported to the United States from Chile).

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL TO ALLOW THE IMPORTATION OF TABLE GRAPES FROM CHILE UNDER A SYSTEMS APPROACH

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to use a systems approach for importing fresh table grapes from Chile into the continental United States.

Currently in order to enter the United States, all table grapes from Chile must be fumigated with methyl bromide as a risk-mitigation measure for *Brevipalpus chilensis* mites. Under the proposed rule, APHIS would allow a combination of risk-mitigation measures, or a systems approach, to be employed as an alternative to methyl bromide fumigation. A systems approach currently is used to manage pests in clementines, mandarins and tangerines imported to the United States from Chile. Producers that would not be able to or would not wish to use the systems approach would be able to continue to use fumigation with methyl bromide as a pest mitigation measure.

The systems approach would require that grape production sites be registered with the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of Chile and be certified as having a low prevalence of *Brevipalpus chilensis* mites. In addition, the systems approach would require post-harvest processing, where diseased and damaged fruit would be removed and the remaining fruit would be packed in clean APHIS-approved containers. After processing, samples of the fruit would be inspected by APHIS inspectors, in cooperation with the NPPO of Chile. Each shipment of grapes also would be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the NPPO of Chile, stating that the grapes were produced in compliance with the proposed regulations. In addition, a sample of the shipment would be inspected at the first port of arrival into the United States. Grapes that do not meet the proposed phytosanitary conditions may still be imported into the United States if the fruit is fumigated with methyl bromide either in Chile or at the first port of arrival to the United States.

The systems approach would allow an alternative to methyl bromide treatment for table grapes from Chile while continuing to protect against the introduction of pests into the United States.

Notice of this proposed rule is published in the Aug. 27 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Oct. 27. Send two copies of postal or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2007-0152, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2007-0152>. Click on "Add Comments" to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

Comments received are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be viewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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