



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

Angela Harless (202) 720-4623

USDA IMPLEMENTS RISK-BASED PROCESS FOR CERTAIN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FROM HAWAII AND U.S. TERRITORIES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will issue a final rule establishing a risk-based process for approving the interstate movement of certain fruits and vegetables from Hawaii and the territories in the United States. APHIS also is acknowledging pest-free areas in Hawaii and the territories using a notice-based process.

The process for approving certain fruits and vegetables only apply to those commodities that can be safely moved interstate, subject to one or more of six designated phytosanitary measures. These measures include inspection in either the state of origin or the first state of arrival; approved treatment; origination from a pest-free area; inspection and certification in the state or territory of origin showing that the commodity is pest-free; limiting the distribution of the commodity to certain states or determining that the risk associated with the commodity can be mitigated through commercial practices.

The interstate movement of fruits and vegetables that require additional phytosanitary measures will continue to undergo the full rulemaking process.

The changes in this final rule do not alter which fruits and vegetables currently are eligible for interstate movement or how the risks associated with those commodities would be evaluated or mitigated. The changes only make more timely the approval of fruits and vegetables that are safe for interstate movement in the United States.

APHIS also is making other changes, which include:

- Establishing a "notice-based" process for acknowledging changes in the status of pest-free areas;
- Reorganizing the regulations to consolidate and eliminate redundant requirements; and
- Making various non-substantive changes to the regulations to make them easier to use.

These changes make APHIS' domestic interstate movement regulations more consistent with its fruit and vegetable import regulations, also known as Quarantine 56.

This action is published in the Jan. 16 *Federal Register* and becomes effective Feb. 17.

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