



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA ANNOUNCES QUARANTINE TO PREVENT SPREAD OF CITRUS DISEASE

WASHINGTON, June 17, 2010 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is issuing an interim rule announcing a plant quarantine in several states and territories in the United States to stop the spread of citrus greening, a plant disease that greatly reduces citrus production, destroys the economic value of the fruit and can kill trees. The interim rule replaces all previous federal orders related to citrus greening, expands areas under quarantine, allows additional treatment options and provides exemptions for certain fully processed products, such as curry leaves and kaffir leaves.

The interim rule is placing under quarantine the states of Florida and Georgia, the territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, two parishes in Louisiana and two counties in South Carolina due to the presence of citrus greening. It also imposes quarantine restrictions for the Asian citrus psyllid, a carrier of the bacterial pathogen that causes citrus greening, on the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, and on the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The restrictions for the insect also extend to portions of three other states: three entire counties in South Carolina, three entire counties and portions of three others in California and portions of one county in Arizona.

The quarantines are a response to the discovery of the citrus greening disease or the Asian citrus psyllid in those affected areas. Interstate movement of certain plant material and products (except fruit and certain processed products) will be restricted or prohibited from quarantine areas. The rule also establishes labeling requirements for most nursery stock sold commercially within an area quarantined for citrus greening. These actions are necessary on an emergency basis to prevent the spread of the disease and its carrier to noninfested areas of the United States.

Citrus greening is considered to be one of the most serious citrus diseases in the world. Citrus greening is a bacterial disease that spreads internally throughout the plant. The bacteria do not pose a health threat to humans, livestock or pets. The disease is transmitted from infected plants to healthy plants by the Asian citrus psyllid or the grafting of infected tissues onto healthy host plants. Symptoms commonly associated with the disease first appear as yellow shoots or blotchy mottling and/or yellowing of the leaves. As the disease progresses, the trees suffer excessive leaf drop and foliage becomes sparse with fewer or smaller leaves and tip dieback. The disease also affects the fruit, causing it to ripen unevenly and become lopsided, visibly smaller and bitter-tasting. Seeds within the fruit fail to fully develop and are aborted.

Once the host plant becomes infected, there is no cure for the disease. In areas of the world where the disease exists naturally, citrus trees decline and die within a few years and may never produce usable fruit. The disease is known by a number of different common names including

huanglongbing, yellow shoot disease, likubin, dieback, phloem necrosis or vein phloem degeneration. Citrus greening was first detected in the United States in Miami-Dade County, Fla., in 2005, and is only known to be present in the United States in the states of Florida and Georgia, the territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, two parishes in Louisiana and two counties in South Carolina.

This interim rule is published in today's June 17 *Federal Register* and becomes effective upon publication.

Consideration will be given to comments we receive on or before Aug. 16. You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0015> to submit or view comments.
- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0015, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0015.

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

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