



# 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

## **FIRST SHIPMENTS OF VIETNAM DRAGON FRUIT ARRIVE IN UNITED STATES**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that on Saturday, Oct. 18, the first shipments of irradiated dragon fruit from Vietnam arrived in Long Beach, Calif.

"This is another important step in a continuing process of expanding agricultural trade," said APHIS administrator, Cindy Smith. "The irradiation technology protects American agriculture while providing our trading partners, like Vietnam, another treatment alternative that ensures its commodities are free of harmful pests and diseases."

APHIS approved the importation of precleared, commercial shipments of fresh Vietnam dragon fruit, provided certain conditions are met. To ensure that plant pests of quarantine significance do not enter the United States, dragon fruit must be treated with specified doses of irradiation prior to export at an APHIS-certified facility. Each shipment must also be accompanied by a certificate issued by the national plant protection organization of Vietnam with additional declarations certifying that the treatment and inspection of the dragon fruit was made in accordance with APHIS regulations. In addition, inspectors with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection may further inspect precleared commodities at the port of first arrival.

Vietnam is the third Southeast Asian country to have fruit irradiated at an overseas site and approved for importation into the United States, following India and Thailand. Irradiation became an approved treatment on all pests for fruits and vegetables entering the United States in 2002. In 2006, APHIS approved a generic dose of for a wider range of imported fruits and vegetables. The use of irradiation provides an alternative to other pest control methods, such as fumigation, cold and heat treatments.

#

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom>. Also, anyone with an e-mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to [lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov](mailto:lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov) and leave the subject blank. In the message, type `subscribe press_releases`.