



Appendix H

Protocol for Inspection of Coated or Pelleted Seed, Seed Tape, Seed Mats or Seed Embedded in Any Other Substrate that Obscures Visibility

Introduction

This protocol is for the importation of commercial shipments of the articles listed above, except for Canadian origin seed (see 7CFR 361). Currently, the listed articles are not enterable because the seed can not be properly inspected. Under this protocol, authorized officials in the exporting country will draw official seed samples from lots of seed before processing in the country of origin. The unprocessed samples will accompany the shipment of processed seed, and will be presented for inspection by Customs and Border Protection-Agriculture Inspection (CBP-AI) at the port of entry. If the samples are free of quarantine significant species¹, plant pests, soil and Federal noxious weeds, CBP-AI will release the shipment. If CBP-AI inspectors find quarantine significant species, plant pests, soil, or Federal noxious weeds in the sample, they will refuse entry to the shipment.

Procedure

Importers wishing to participate in this program must comply with the following protocol:

- ◆ Only seed which is allowed entry to the United States without treatment or other restrictions may be considered under this program.
- ◆ Each shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by an authorized official of the foreign government of origin.
- ◆ An authorized official of the foreign government must sample each lot of seed before the seed is processed. Sampling methods must comply with the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) requirements, which satisfy Federal Seed Act (FSA) procedures. The sample must be sealed or verified as sealed by

1 A quarantine significant species is one regulated because it is a pathway for a plant pest that is difficult to detect. For example, corn and corn relative seeds are prohibited from certain countries because they may be associated with certain injurious insects and diseases.

the sampler and identified with the marks of the lot(s) sampled. Sealed means the container in which the seed is held is closed in such a way that it cannot be opened to gain access to the seed and closed again without either destroying the seal or leaving evidence of tampering.

- ◆ The sealed sample(s) must accompany the seed shipment in a package clearly marked for CPB-AI inspection and placed in a conspicuous location, such as the doors of the shipping container.
- ◆ The shipment must be accompanied by an importer document (such as an ISTA certificate) declaring the sample was taken by a government authorized official and the method of sampling complies with ISTA requirements. The seal number or other distinguishing marks of the sample must be on the documentation.
- ◆ CBP-AI inspectors will inspect the sample at the port of entry using the same inspection procedures, less sampling, currently used for imported seed shipments. CBP-AI inspectors will examine the sample for soil, Federal noxious weeds, quarantine significant species and plant pests. If they find quarantine significant species, Federal noxious weeds, plant pests, or soil beyond tolerance in the sample, they will refuse entry to the shipment. The inspectors will take a small (10-25 seeds) sample of processed seed, remove the covering (coating, tape, etc.), and compare the seed to the uncoated sample. The sample must match the shipment, same type and size of seed. If the inspectors detect obvious differences, they will refuse entry to the shipment. If the small coated sample matches the uncoated sample, and the samples are free of plant pests, soil, quarantine-significant species and Federal noxious weeds, the shipment will be released.

Importers interested in participating in this program should submit a permit application (PPQ form 587) including the name of the exporting country's plant protection organization and the individual who will sample the seed. Send the request to USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Permit Unit, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, Maryland 20737.