



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

Andrea McNally (301) 734-0602

USDA PROPOSES NEW APPROACH TO KEEP PLANT PESTS OUT OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, July, 23, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing revisions to its plants for planting regulations, commonly known as the Q37 regulations. The proposed revisions would allow APHIS to maximize protection of U.S. agriculture from foreign pests that could enter this country while minimizing adverse economic and trade impacts.

To fully address the risk posed by imported plants for planting, APHIS proposes to establish a new category of plants within its regulations. The plants in this category would not be allowed entry into the United States until a pest risk analysis is completed.

APHIS would include plants in this new category if scientific evidence demonstrates that the taxon of plant is a potential quarantine pest or host of a quarantine pest. The initial list of plant taxa that would be included in the new category is currently being developed. If this proposed rule becomes final, this list of plants for planting will be published as a notice after the final rule.

APHIS' current Q37 regulations categorize imported plants as either prohibited (not allowed) or restricted (allowed under certain conditions) and they do not require a pest risk analysis prior to the importation of a new taxonomic group of plants. This differs from APHIS' fruits and vegetables regulations where the importation of fruits and vegetables is prohibited until the completion of such an analysis.

Plants for planting can carry a wide variety of pests that are more likely to become established in the United States than pests that could enter through imported fruits or vegetables. The plant itself also could be a pest. It is important for APHIS to enhance its current regulations to ensure that they provide adequate protection against the risk posed by plants that are being imported.

Any additions or changes to this category would be published in the *Federal Register* with the opportunity for the public to comment. Countries, individuals or organizations also could request that APHIS conduct a pest risk analysis for a taxon to be removed from the new category.

This proposed action is published in today's July 23 *Federal Register*.

- more -

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Oct. 21. 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-2006-0011> to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2006-0011, 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-2006-0011.

#

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 and leave the subject blank. In the message, type `subscribe press_releases`.