

## Atlanta Plant Inspection Station Expands Import Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today announced that the plant inspection station located in Atlanta, Ga., has expanded its inspection services to include all imported plant materials that are allowed entry into the United States. These enhanced services are now available.

When the Atlanta facility opened in 2004, it was authorized to inspect only a limited amount of low-risk propagative commodities due to the lack of space and equipment to perform inspections. Industry demands and the increase in volume of imported plants prompted the Atlanta-based station to improve its inspection capabilities, and it is now certified to inspect all shipments of plants for planting from foreign countries to ensure that they are free of pests and diseases.

APHIS has 17 plant inspection stations located throughout the country at major international airports and seaports and at major crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border. Plant health safeguarding specialists at these plant inspection stations examine imported plants and seeds to ensure that they are free from foreign pests and diseases that could be damaging to either U.S. agriculture or natural resources. Specialists also ensure that plants and seeds comply with federal import regulations and permit requirements. When regulated pests or diseases are detected, APHIS may require that the planting material be treated, exported or destroyed.

APHIS also enforces the rules and regulations that apply to the import, export and re-export of plant species protected by the Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). All 17 plant inspection stations have been approved by

the Department of Interior to inspect CITES-protected plants, such as exotic orchids or cacti, to ensure that they match the description in the accompanying CITES documents.

For more information on this subject, please visit the APHIS Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) or contact:

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