

Questions and Answers: USDA's Federal Order to Prevent the Spread of Citrus Greening and the Asian Citrus Psyllid

Q. What is citrus greening?

A. Citrus greening, also known as huanglongbing or yellow dragon disease, is one of the most serious citrus diseases in the world. It was first detected in Miami-Dade County, FL, in September 2005. Citrus greening is not harmful to people, but the disease can have serious economic consequences. The bacterial disease greatly reduces production, destroys the economic value of fruit, and can kill trees. Once infected, there is no cure for a tree with citrus greening disease. In areas of the world where citrus greening is endemic, citrus trees decline and die within a few years. The disease has significantly reduced citrus production in Asia, Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Brazil.

Q. What is the Asian citrus psyllid?

A. The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is the primary insect vector that spreads citrus greening from infected trees to healthy trees as they feed on the plant. In addition, the ACP is a citrus pest in its own right. The ACP, which has been detected in Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and Texas, bears the scientific name *Diaphorina citri* Kuwayama and is widely distributed in southern Asia and parts of Mexico and Brazil. Adult ACPs are small (3–4 mm) and have mottled brown wings.

Q. Why does the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have a Federal Order in place for citrus greening and ACP?

A. APHIS first issued a Federal Order to prevent the spread of citrus greening and ACP from quarantined areas in Florida on September 16, 2005. This Federal Order has been updated four times since to reflect new findings of citrus greening and ACP. Most recently, on June 24, 2008, APHIS updated its Federal Order when citrus greening and Asian citrus psyllids were confirmed in Louisiana. Citrus greening was

confirmed in Orleans Parish and ACP was confirmed in Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Charles, St. Tammany, and Terrebonne parishes. In addition to Orleans Parish, the entire State of Florida is quarantined for citrus greening. The Federal Order also places the four Louisiana parishes, all of Florida, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico, as well as 32 Texas counties under quarantine for Asian citrus psyllid.

Q. What restrictions are imposed on the State of Florida and Orleans Parish, LA, for citrus greening?

A. The Federal Order restricts the interstate movement of plants and plant material that are hosts for citrus greening outside of the quarantined areas. Plant material is defined as all live plants and plant parts, including but not limited to nursery stock, cuttings, budwood, and seed for propagation. For a list of host plants please visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/citrus_greening/hosts.shtml. While the movement of citrus fruit is not prohibited under the citrus greening quarantine, restrictions on fruit movement are already in place in Florida due to the presence of citrus canker. All Federal regulations must be followed when shipping Florida citrus interstate. Citrus canker is not known to be in Louisiana, so there is no restriction on fruit movement from this State.

Q. Does the June 24, 2008, order replace previous Federal Orders issued to prevent the spread of citrus greening?

A. Yes. This order updates and replaces all previous versions of the Federal Order.

Q. Why is APHIS restricting the movement of citrus seed used for propagation?

A. Recent studies have shown that it is possible that citrus greening could be spread through infected seeds. As a result, APHIS is restricting the movement of seed used for propagation. APHIS will continue to evaluate the latest science on this issue and update its regulations accordingly.

Q. Will APHIS allow the interstate movement of restricted nursery stock?

A. If, in the future, scientific evidence demonstrates that nursery stock can be handled in a way that prevents the risk of spreading citrus greening and citrus canker, APHIS would pursue rulemaking to allow the interstate movement of these plants. However, until

these requirements are established, nursery stock from areas quarantined for citrus greening can only be moved interstate for immediate export accompanied by a limited permit that prevents distribution to any citrus-producing States or territories.

Q. What is a limited permit?

A. A limited permit contains specific language prohibiting the shipment of host material from quarantined areas to citrus-producing States and territories. A limited permit is required to move regulated articles to noncitrus-producing States. The limited permit must be displayed on a plastic or metal tag attached to each plant, or on the box or container if the plant is sealed in plastic. In addition, the limited permit statement must be displayed on the outside of any shipping containers used to transport citrus greening-host plants and must be attached to the bill of lading or other shipping documents that accompany the plants. A limited permit can only be issued by APHIS, the State, territory, or commonwealth where the host plants originated, or by an authorized representative under a compliance agreement.

Q. Why does the Federal Order also restrict the movement of ACP host plants from Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, 32 Texas counties and four Louisiana parishes?

A. The ACP, which is a serious citrus pest as well as the main vector for citrus greening, has been detected in these States and territories prompting the Federal quarantine. To prevent the further spread of the ACP, all live plants and plant material from quarantined areas must be treated according to guidelines established in the Federal Order. In addition, the State of Texas established a parallel quarantine on November 30, 2007, and the State of Louisiana also established one on June 30, 2008, restricting the intrastate movement of ACP-host material in order to prevent the spread of the disease to additional counties.

Q. Does APHIS plan to update its regulations with regard to citrus greening and the ACP?

A. Yes. APHIS anticipates establishing an interim rule in 2008 detailing new requirements.

Q. What 32 Texas counties are quarantined to prevent the spread of the ACP?

A. The following Texas counties are under quarantine for the ACP: Aransas, Atascosa, Bee, Bexar, Brazoria, Brooks, Caldwell, Cameron, Dimmit, Duval, Harris, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, Matagorda, Maverick, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Starr, Uvalde, Val Verde, Victoria, Waller, Washington, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata.

Q. If a State or territory has the ACP, does that mean that they also have citrus greening?

A. No. Citrus greening has only been detected in Florida and Orleans Parish, LA. The goal of the Federal Order is to prevent citrus greening from becoming established in other States and territories. If citrus greening were introduced into other citrus-producing States or territories where ACP populations exist, it would likely result in the establishment and rapid spread of the disease.

Q. What requirements must be met in order to move ACP-host material?

A. The Federal Order requires ACP-host material from quarantined areas to be treated, inspected, and stamped with a limited permit to prevent distribution to any citrus-producing States and territories where the ACP is not currently present. In addition, fresh fruit, which is not otherwise regulated or restricted due to citrus canker must be cleared using normal packing-house procedures if it is being moved to Alabama, Arizona, California, or portions of Texas and Louisiana not quarantined for ACP. Anyone engaged in the business of growing or handling citrus must enter into a compliance agreement with APHIS. For a list of host plants, please visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/citrus_greening/hosts.shtml.

Q. What is a compliance agreement?

A. A compliance agreement is a contract between APHIS and any person engaged in the business of growing or handling regulated articles for the purpose of interstate movement. Compliance agreements help facilitate the interstate movement of regulated articles in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Anyone operating under a compliance agreement must agree to handle, pack, process, treat, and move regulated articles in accordance with the Federal Order and to issue all permits and certificates in accordance with instructions. Any compliance agreement may be cancelled orally or in writing by an inspector if the inspector finds that the person who entered into the compliance agreement has failed to meet the established requirements.

Q. How do I arrange a compliance agreement?

A. Compliance agreements may be arranged by contacting a local office of the Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS (listed in local telephone directories), or by contacting APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine, Domestic and Emergency Operations, 4700 River Road, Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236.

Q. What are the approved treatments for moving ACP-host plants and plant material interstate from quarantine areas?

A. All plants and plant material moving interstate from ACP-quarantined areas must be treated using an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved product labeled for use in nurseries. The plants and plant material must be treated 30 days prior to movement with a soil drench containing imidacloprid as the active ingredient. Ten days prior to shipping, the plants and plant material must be treated with a foliar spray with a product containing either acetamiprid, chlorpyrifos, or fenprothrin as the active ingredient. Plant parts intended for human consumption, such as curry leaves, must be treated using methyl bromide.

Q. What are the requirements for moving ACP-host plant parts, such as curry leaves, intended for human consumption?

A. Plant parts, such as curry leaves, intended for human consumption must be treated with methyl bromide in accordance with the APHIS treatment manual prior to interstate movement. EPA has approved methyl bromide fumigation as a safe treatment for plants and plant materials intended for human consumption. For more information about treatment schedules, please visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/. Inspection following treatment will not be required because methyl bromide is effective in killing the ACP in all its life stages. Prior to interstate movement, shipping containers must be clearly marked to indicate where the leaves were produced and that the leaves have been treated in accordance with APHIS requirements.

Q. Who is responsible for inspecting ACP-host plants and plant material?

A. APHIS personnel will conduct inspections as well as designated State officials. Inspectors must confirm that all regulated articles have been treated as required within 72 hours prior to shipping and that they are free of the ACP.

Q. What if the inspector finds the ACP on the plants or plant material?

A. If the ACP is detected on any plant or plant material during an inspection, then the shipment would be required to undergo additional treatment and re-inspection. If upon re-inspection the plants or plant material are found to be free of the ACP, they would be allowed to move interstate.

Q. Where can I find more information about citrus greening?

A. For more information on citrus greening, please visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/index.shtml and click on the citrus greening hot issues link.

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