

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2016-31

Subject: APHIS Revises Citrus Greening and Citrus Variegated Chlorosis Regulatory Requirements for Imported *Citrus* spp. and *Poncirus* spp. Seed.

To: State and Territory Agricultural Regulatory Officials

Effective immediately, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is removing the following species of seed from the list of prohibited articles for citrus greening (CG) caused by *Candidatus Liberibacter*:

- *Citrus* spp.
- *Poncirus* spp.

APHIS is also removing *Citrus* spp. seed from the list of prohibited articles for citrus variegated chlorosis (CVC) caused by *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Poncirus spp. seed, however, will remain on the list of prohibited articles for CVC.

In addition, the importation of *Citrus* spp. seed from Costa Rica and Paraguay is no longer prohibited.

APHIS is taking this action based on the findings of a recent analysis entitled “Global Pest List of *Citrus* spp. Pathogens and an Examination of Evidence for Seed Transmission.” That analysis concluded that it is unlikely that any *Candidatus Liberibacter* or *Xylella fastidiosa* species are able to cause disease through seed transmission

The removal of *Citrus* spp. and *Poncirus* spp. seed from the list of prohibited articles will relieve restrictions for growers and will open market opportunities for trade in seed. APHIS will continue to regulate seed of non-*Citrus* spp. and non-*Poncirus* spp. hosts of CG and CVC. APHIS will reassess the list of regulated articles if additional evidence is found on seed transmission.

APHIS will publish a notice of this change in the *Federal Register*. For additional information, you may call Regulatory Policy Specialist Craig Noble at 301-851-2146.

Osama El-Lissy
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Attachment: Federal Order

FEDERAL ORDER

Citrus Greening and Citrus Variegated Chlorosis Regulatory Requirements for Imported Seed

DA-2016-31

Effective immediately, this import Federal Order removes the following species of seed from the list of prohibited articles for citrus greening (CG) caused by *Candidatus Liberibacter*:

- *Citrus* spp.
- *Poncirus* spp.

Citrus spp. seed is also removed from the list of prohibited articles for citrus variegated chlorosis (CVC) caused by *Xylella fastidiosa*

Poncirus spp. seed, however, remains on the list of prohibited articles for CVC.

In addition, the importation of *Citrus* spp. seed from Costa Rica and Paraguay is no longer prohibited.

This Federal Order is issued in accordance with the regulatory authority provided by the Plant Protection Act of June 20, 2000, as amended, Section 412(a), 7 U.S.C. 7712(a). The Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to prohibit or restrict the movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant part, or article if the Secretary determines the prohibition or restriction is necessary to prevent the dissemination of a plant pest within the United States. This Federal Order is also issued pursuant to the regulations promulgated under the Plant Protection Act and found in the *Code of Federal Regulations* at 7 CFR 301.76. The regulations designate certain articles, including seed, as regulated articles.

APHIS established the current CG and CVC regulations in an interim rule effective and published in the *Federal Register* on April 6, 2010 (75 FR 17289-17294, Docket No. APHIS-2008-0052). At that time, seed of select species was determined to be a host of CG and CVC. APHIS based this determination on scientific evidence that a small percentage of seedlings from the seed of CG and CVC-infected plants tested positive for the bacterium.

Since 2010, APHIS received several requests to re-evaluate its policy on seed as a pathway for the spread of CG and CVC. The removal of seed from the list of prohibited articles will relieve restrictions for growers and will open market opportunities for trade in seed.

To respond to these requests, APHIS published an analysis entitled “Global Pest List of *Citrus* spp. Pathogens and an Examination of Evidence for Seed Transmission” and an additional supplement to the global pest list of *Citrus* spp. detailing *Poncirus* spp. and its hybrids. As detailed in the analysis, research results found that *Candidatus Liberibacter* (CG) and *Xylella*

fastidiosa (CVC) cells were present in seed coats, but even a large number of cells are insufficient to lead to the infection of the embryo on its own. There is no vascular continuity between maternal seed tissue, including the seed coat, and the developing embryo. Based on the above evidence, APHIS is revising the import requirements for *Citrus* spp., and *Poncirus* spp. seeds, in 7 CFR 319.37-5(w) to harmonize with domestic interstate restrictions on movement.

APHIS, however, will continue to regulate seed of the following genera for CG and CVC:

- *Aeglopsis*
- *Atalantia*
- *Balsamocitrus*
- *Bergera*
- *Calodendrum*
- *Citrofortunella*
- *xCitroncirus*
- *Clausena*
- *Fortunella*
- *Limonia*
- *Microcitrus*
- *Murraya*
- *Poncirus* (Regulated for CVC only)
- *Severinia*
- *Swinglea*
- *Toddalia*
- *Triphasia*
- *Vepris*

For additional information, you may call Regulatory Policy Specialist Craig Noble at 301-851-2146.