

US: APHIS amends regulations for new cold treatment facilities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending its treatment regulations to standardize the process for approving new cold treatment facilities in southern and western U.S. States.

"We are also establishing generic criteria that these facilities must follow to safely treat imported commodities," APHIS said in a release.

While the new process will eliminate the rulemaking requirement for new cold treatment facilities in southern and western states, APHIS said it will still evaluate each proposed location and approve it only after sufficient safeguards are identified and concurrence from the pertinent state is obtained.

In addition, APHIS said it is amending requirements to codify existing treatment procedures for fruits and vegetables and make them more consistent, transparent and enforceable.

These actions include:

- Expanding fruit cutting and inspection to commodities that have been cold-treated for a wider variety of pests of concern, not just Mediterranean fruit fly
- Requiring compliance agreements for most treatment facilities and providers, including those who conduct fumigations or operate a fumigation facility in the United States
- Harmonizing language in the irradiation treatment regulations with the cold treatment regulations

"Together, these actions will make our treatment regulations consistent across all treatment types, transparent to stakeholders, and enforceable, while strengthening our ability to keep pests of concern from entering the country," the agency wrote.

The rule becomes effective on March 14, 2018, 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

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