

Fruit and Vegetable Import Requirements

Fruit and Vegetable Programs

Fruit and Vegetable Import Regulations

Imports of fruits, vegetables, and nuts into the United States are subject to a number of U.S. laws intended to protect human and plant health and to ensure quality. In addition, specific rates of duty are assessed on some imported foods. Below is a summary of key U.S. import requirements affecting fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937

Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act requires that whenever the Secretary of Agriculture issues grade, size, quality, or maturity regulations under domestic marketing orders for certain specified commodities, the same or comparable regulations on imports of those commodities must be issued. Import regulations apply only during those periods when domestic marketing order regulations are in effect. Currently, the following commodities are subject to Section 8e import regulations: avocados, dates (other than dates for processing), filberts, grapefruit, table grapes, kiwifruit, olives (other than Spanish-style green olives), onions, oranges, plums, Irish potatoes, prunes, raisins, tomatoes, and walnuts. Additional information regarding requirements for any of the above specified commodities may be obtained from:

USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Marketing Order Administration Branch
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2525-South
Stop Code 0237
Washington, DC 20250-0237
Telephone: (202) 720-2491
Fax: (202) 720-5698
Internet: www.ams.usda.gov/fv/8ewelcome.html

Plant Quarantine Act

Plant quarantine regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are divided into two classes--prohibitory and restrictive. Prohibitory orders forbid the entry of designated plants and plant products that are subject to attack by plant pests for which there is no treatment available to ensure complete freedom from such pests. Restrictive orders allow the entry of plants or plant products under either a treatment or an inspection requirement. Import permits are required. Questions on entry requirements for plants and plant products should be addressed to:

USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine
Import Permit Unit
4700 River Road, Unit 136
Riverdale, MD 20737-1236
Telephone: (301) 734-8645
Fax: (301) 734-5786
Internet: www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq

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Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to register all pesticides used in the United States and to establish safe residue tolerances for chemicals that may be found in domestic or imported food. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for inspecting imported and domestic food to ensure that illegal pesticides are not present in the product. For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Pesticide Programs
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Mail Code 7501-C
Washington, DC 20460
Telephone: (703) 305-7090
FAX: (703) 308-4776

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Office of Regulatory Affairs
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 827-1301
FAX: (301) 443-6591

Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act

All imported food products must comply with health and safety standards established under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA). The FDCA prohibits movement in interstate commerce of adulterated and misbranded foods, drugs, and cosmetics. Food additives and colors must be approved by FDA. Information on the FDCA may be obtained from:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
5100 Paint Branch Parkway
College Park, MD 20740-3835
Telephone: (301)436-2600
Internet: www.cfsan.fda.gov

Tariff Act of 1930

Rates of duty on imported commodities are published periodically by the U.S. International Trade Commission in the "Harmonized Tariff Schedules of the United States." Duties on most fruits, vegetables, and nuts are included in Section II, chapters 7, 8, 12 and 13 in Section IV, chapter 20. Specific information on import duties may be obtained from:

U.S. Customs Service
Office of Regulations and Rulings
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 3.4A
Washington, DC 20229
Telephone: (202) 927-0760
Internet: www.customs.ustreas.gov

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