

August 24, 2016

Dear Industry Trade Partners:

Beginning September 1, 2016, all imported commodities subject to Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Section 8e regulation must be presented for inspection to AMS or its Federal-State partners as separate lots that correspond to each individual Customs Entry Number. This requirement aligns the practices in your port with those that have been in place at most other ports of entry in the United States.

Ensuring that your business practices conform to this requirement will help AMS expedite its review and release of your shipments from a "Hold Intact" status to a "May Proceed" status, allowing product movement to market in a speedy and efficient manner. This improvement is a result of AMS transitioning to a new program that utilizes data generated through the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) to monitor compliance with the Section 8e regulations on imported agricultural commodities. Since July 23, 2016, CBP has required all importers to submit their entry filings through the ACE as part of a government-wide deployment of the new International Trade Data System (ITDS).

The ACE electronic interface is accelerating the processing of entry filings for all importers by automating clearance processes by all government agencies, including AMS. To accomplish this, CBP requires each government agency to electronically message back to ACE with the status of each entry filing. With ACE, importers will be able to determine the entry status under AMS or any other Agency's requirements that determine release by CBP for entry into the United States. Presenting your products for AMS inspection segregated by Customs Entry Number allows AMS to notify CBP so that your products can be released into the channels of commerce quickly and efficiently.

Please contact your local USDA inspection office for further information about requesting an inspection. For questions about meeting Section 8e import regulations or the electronic filing process please contact our Compliance and Enforcement Branch at (888) 551-3523. You can also learn more about the ACE and how to make it work for you by viewing a pre-recorded webinar, available at: www.ams.usda.gov/event/importing-fruits-vegetables-and-specialty-crops-using-ace.

Sincerely,



for Michael V. Durando
Director, Marketing Order and Agreement Division
Specialty Crops Program