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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 301

[Docket No. 01-058-1]

Karnal Bunt; Regulated Areas

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim rule and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are amending the Karnal bunt regulations by adding Throckmorton and Young Counties in Texas to the list of areas regulated because of Karnal bunt, a fungal disease of wheat, due to the detection of bunted kernels in grain grown in this area. This action will help prevent the spread of Karnal bunt into noninfected areas of the United States.

DATES: This interim rule was effective June 8, 2001. We invite you to comment on this docket. We will consider all comments that we receive by August 13, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 01-058-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 01-058-1.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Vedpal S. Malik, National Karnal Bunt Coordinator, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-6774.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Karnal bunt is a fungal disease of wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), durum wheat (*Triticum durum*), and triticale (*Triticum aestivum X Secale cereale*), a hybrid of wheat and rye. Karnal bunt is caused by the fungus *Tilletia indica* (Mitra) Mundkur and is spread by spores, primarily through the planting of infected seed. Some countries in the international wheat market regulate Karnal bunt as a fungal disease requiring quarantine; therefore, without measures taken by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to prevent its spread, the presence of Karnal bunt in the United States could have significant consequence with regard to the export of wheat to international markets. The regulations regarding Karnal bunt are set forth in 7 CFR 301.89-1 through 301.89-16 (referred to below as the regulations).

Regulated Areas

The regulations in § 301.89-3(e) provide that we will classify a field or area as a regulated area when it is:

- A field planted with seed from a lot found to contain a bunted wheat kernel;
- A distinct definable area that contains at least one field that was found during a survey to contain a bunted wheat kernel. The distinct definable area may include an area where Karnal bunt is not known to exist but where intensive surveys are required because of the areas' proximity to a field found during survey to contain a bunted kernel; or
- A distinct definable area that contains at least one field that was found during survey to contain spores consistent with Karnal bunt and has been determined to be associated with

grain at a handling facility containing a bunted wheat kernel. The distinct definable area may include an area where Karnal bunt is not known to exist but where intensive surveys are required because of that area's proximity to a field that has been associated with grain at a handling facility containing a bunted kernel.

The boundaries of distinct definable areas are determined using the criteria in paragraphs (b) through (d) of § 301.89-3, which provide for the regulation of less than an entire State, the inclusion of noninfected acreage in a regulated area, and the temporary designation of nonregulated areas as regulated areas. Paragraph (c) of § 301.89-3 states that the Administrator may include noninfected acreage within a regulated area due to its proximity to an infestation or inseparability from the infected locality for regulatory purposes, as determined by:

- Projections of the spread of Karnal bunt along the periphery of the infestation;
- The availability of natural habitats and host materials within the noninfected acreage that are suitable for establishment and survival of Karnal bunt; and
- The necessity of including noninfected acreage within the regulated area in order to establish readily identifiable boundaries.

The regulations at § 301.89-3(f) set the boundaries for regulated areas in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. Certain regulated areas in Arizona, California, and Texas include noninfected acreage that functions as a buffer zone to guard against the spread of Karnal bunt.

When we include noninfected acreage in a regulated area for one or more of the reasons previously listed, the noninfected acreage, along with the rest of the acreage in the regulated area, is intensively surveyed. Negative results from surveys of the noninfected acreage provide assurance that all infected acreage is within the regulated area. In effect, the noninfected acreage serves as a buffer zone between fields or areas associated with a bunted kernel and areas outside of the regulated area.

In this document, we are adding to the list of regulated areas in Texas Throckmorton and Young Counties in their entirety. This action is necessary due to the discovery of bunted wheat

kernels in several wheat fields in western Young County, adjacent to Throckmorton County. Initial surveys indicate that Karnal bunt is also present in other fields in the area we are regulating, and that the spread of the disease to the infected fields may have occurred as a result of the movement of contaminated seed into the area or through the movement into the area of cattle that may have grazed in infected fields. Until we are able to determine the extent of this new infection by conducting detection and delimiting surveys, it is essential that we delineate a large enough regulated area to include any fields for which there is a reasonable possibility of infection.

Emergency Action

This rulemaking is necessary on an emergency basis to prevent Karnal bunt from spreading to noninfected areas of the United States. Under these circumstances, the Administrator has determined that prior notice and opportunity for public comment are contrary to the public interest and that there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 533 for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

We will consider comments that are received within 60 days of publication of this rule in the **Federal Register**. After the comment period closes, we will publish another document in the **Federal Register**. The document will include a discussion of any comments we receive and any amendments we are making to the rule as a result of the comments.

Executive Order 12866 and Regulatory Flexibility Act

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12866. For this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived its review process required by Executive Order 12866.

This emergency situation makes timely compliance with section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) impracticable. We are currently assessing the potential economic effects of this action on small entities. Based on that assessment, we will either certify that the rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities or publish a final regulatory flexibility analysis.

Executive Order 12372

This program/activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.025 and is subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with

State and local officials. (See 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V.)

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This rule: (1) Preempts all State and local laws and regulations that are inconsistent with this rule; (2) has no retroactive effect; and (3) does not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This interim rule contains no information collection or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 301

Agricultural commodities, Plant diseases and pests, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation.

Accordingly, we are amending 7 CFR part 301 as follows:

PART 301—DOMESTIC QUARANTINE NOTICES

1. The authority citation for part 301 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 166, 7711, 7712, 7714, 7731, 7735, 7751, 7752, 7753, and 7754; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

2. In § 301.89–3, paragraph (f), under the heading for “Texas”, add two new entries in alphabetical order to read as follows:

§ 301.89–3 Regulated areas.

* * * * *

Texas

* * * * *

Throckmorton County. The entire county.

Young County. The entire county.

Done in Washington, DC, this 8th day of June, 2001.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01–14942 Filed 6–13–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 319

[Docket No. 93–131–2]

Importation of Mangoes From the Philippines

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are amending the regulations governing the importation of fruits and vegetables to allow the importation of mangoes from Guimaras Island in the Republic of the Philippines, subject to inspection and the completion of a prescribed vapor heat treatment. We believe that this action is warranted because there appears to be no significant pest risk associated with the importation of mangoes from Guimaras Island in the Philippines under these circumstances. This action will relieve restrictions on the importation of mangoes from the Philippines without presenting a significant risk of introducing plant pests into the United States.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 14, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Paul Gadh, Import Specialist, Phytosanitary Issues Management Team, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 140, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–6799.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The regulations in 7 CFR 319.56 through 319.56–8 (referred to below as the regulations) prohibit or restrict the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States from certain parts of the world to prevent the introduction and dissemination of plant pests that are new to or not widely distributed within the United States.

On January 22, 2001, we published in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 6488–6491, Docket No. 93–131–1) a proposal to amend the regulations to allow the importation of mangoes from Guimaras Island in the Republic of the Philippines, subject to inspection and the completion of a prescribed vapor heat treatment.

We solicited comments concerning our proposal for 60 days ending March 23, 2001. We received four comments by that date. They were from a State agriculture agency, a foreign government, and a firm representing foreign governmental and nongovernmental organizations.