

# Questions and Answers: Importing Irradiated Mangoes from Pakistan into the United States

## Q. When did APHIS announce it would allow mango imports from Pakistan?

**A.** On August 27, 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published in the *Federal Register* a notice announcing our decision to issue permits to allow, under certain conditions, the importation of commercial consignments of fresh mangoes from Pakistan into the continental United States.

## Q. What are the requirements for exporting mangoes from Pakistan to the United States?

**A.** Mangoes must be grown at a registered orchard and packed at a registered packing facility in Pakistan. Before being exported, the mangoes are inspected for quarantine pests by an officer of the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of Pakistan. APHIS defines a quarantine pest as a plant pest or noxious weed that is of potential economic importance and that is either not yet present in the United States, or is present but not widely distributed and is under an official control program.

Fruit must be packed in APHIS-approved, pest-proof boxes with all openings in the packages covered by material with holes no more than 0.8 mm at its widest point or with a mesh size of no greater than 0.6 by 0.6 mm.

Commercial consignments that are certified are irradiated at 400 gray and must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate.

## Q. Where are the irradiation treatments applied?

**A.** Irradiation treatments may be applied at an APHIS-certified facility outside of the United States or upon arrival in the United States.

If irradiation is to be applied upon arrival in the United States, each consignment of mangoes must be inspected by inspectors from the NPPO of Pakistan prior to departure and accompanied by a phytosanitary

certificate issued by the NPPO of Pakistan. The phytosanitary certificate must contain an additional declaration that states: "This consignment was inspected by the Government of Pakistan inspectors and found free of *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *mangiferaeindicae*." In addition, each pallet in the consignment must be conspicuously marked with a 8-1/2- by 11-inch sign on at least two sides of the pallet that says, "FRUIT FOR IRRADIATION IN THE U.S."

Fruit that is to be treated upon arrival in the United States is limited to importation as air freight commercial cargo directly to designated ports of entry and must follow a specific transport route from the port to an APHIS-approved irradiation facility. This is to maintain safeguarding and prevent the accidental introduction or dissemination of foreign plant pests during transit.

If irradiation is applied outside of the United States, each consignment of mangoes must be inspected jointly by NPPO of Pakistan and APHIS inspectors and accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by NPPO of Pakistan. The phytosanitary certificate must document that the consignment received the required irradiation treatment. The phytosanitary certificate must also contain an additional declaration that states: "This consignment was inspected jointly by APHIS and Government of Pakistan inspectors, and found free of *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *mangiferaeindicae*."

## Q. What happens when my consignment arrives in the United States?

**A.** When a consignment arrives at a U.S. port of entry, Customs Border Protection (CBP) officers will verify documents accompanying the consignment to ensure it was properly treated and inspected.

If the consignment was treated outside the United States, CBP officers will review the:

- PPQ Form 203—Foreign Site Certificate of Inspection—signed by an APHIS officer in the exporting country;
- Phytosanitary certificate, issued by Pakistan's NPPO to certify that the consignment has been treated; and
- APHIS import permit, verifying that the consignment has been authorized by USDA to be imported into the United States.

If the consignment will be treated within the United States, CBP officers will review the:

- Phytosanitary certificate, issued by the country of origin's NPPO to certify that the consignment has been inspected;

- APHIS import permit, verifying that the consignment has been authorized by USDA to be imported into the United States for treatment; and
- Signed APHIS importer compliance agreement, which must be signed 30 days prior to shipping. If these entry requirements are not met, the consignment will be prohibited entry.

**Q. What permits are required to import mangoes from Pakistan into the United States?**

**A.** An importer compliance agreement must be signed and issued prior to submitting a permit application. In addition, importers must apply for a permit at least 60 days in advance, as permits are required to be issued and in place 30 days prior to shipment. Importers should submit a permit application to APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program at: Permit Services, USDA-APHIS-PPQ, 4700 River Road, Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737. The permit application form is available online at [www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/permits/plantproducts.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/permits/plantproducts.shtml) or by calling (301) 734-0841.

Importers can also apply for and receive permits online through APHIS' ePermits system. This system is a Web-based tool that allows importers to apply for a permit, check its status, and view it on the Internet. The ePermits system also enables Federal regulatory officials to issue, track, and rapidly verify the validity of import permits. The system minimizes the time it takes to complete permit applications, process the data, and issue permits.

First-time applicants should note the ePermits system requires users to first be verified by eAuthentication. eAuthentication is a registration process that enables customers to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. To learn more about ePermits, visit [www.aphis.usda.gov/permits/learn\\_epermits.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/permits/learn_epermits.shtml).

**Q. Are there any other requirements to import mangoes from Pakistan?**

**A.** Yes. Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 305.9 (c) requires importers and irradiation facility operators to sign a compliance agreement with APHIS to ensure chain of custody and maintain appropriate safeguards during importation. In addition to USDA requirements, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) CBP regulations apply. For information about FDA's requirements, please e-mail [industry@fda.gov](mailto:industry@fda.gov). For more information about CBP's requirements, please call the CBP INFO Center at 1-877-CBP-5511.

Importers may also contact an international customs broker to assist with inspection and shipping logistics as well as various agency approvals. A list of customs brokers is available by State on the CBP Web site at [www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/contacts/ports/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/contacts/ports/).

**Q. Can I carry fresh mangoes from Pakistan to the United States on my next flight?**

**A.** No. The rule only applies to commercial consignments of mangoes. Individuals traveling to the United States cannot bring mangoes from Pakistan, even if they have been treated, in their personal baggage. The mangoes must enter the United States via commercial channels (air or ship) where quarantine security can be assured. Boxes of mangoes leaving that chain of custody are prohibited entry into the United States.

**Q. Can I send mangoes from Pakistan to the United States through the mail?**

**A.** No. As stated above, mangoes can only be commercially shipped to the United States. The fruit must be sent directly from the country of origin via commercial conveyance (air or ship) directly to the United States. This ensures a strict chain of custody in the event the imported fruit shows signs of pest infestation.

**Q. Why haven't mangoes from Pakistan been allowed into the United States until now?**

**A.** APHIS approved the use of irradiation as a quarantine treatment for fruits and vegetables in October 2002. Then, in January 2006, APHIS published another rule approving a minimum generic dose (400 gray) of irradiation for imported fruits and vegetables. Until the availability of this generic dose, certain pests associated with the mangoes could not be mitigated with any other APHIS-approved treatments.

After this treatment became available, APHIS received a request from the Government of Pakistan to allow the importation of fresh mangoes into the continental United States. APHIS then conducted a pest risk analysis to identify pests of quarantine significance and phytosanitary measures that could be used to mitigate the risk of introducing or disseminating these pests into the United States. Based on this analysis, APHIS concluded that irradiation, along with other safeguarding measures, can be used to safely import mangoes from Pakistan into the United States.

**Q. What is food irradiation?**

**A.** Irradiation involves briefly exposing food to ionizing energy for a specific length of time in order to destroy or sterilize bacteria, microorganisms, or other pests of concern. Food is irradiated in a special processing facility and never comes in direct contact with the energy source. It is important to note that irradiation does not necessarily kill the pest; it will however sterilize it, rendering it incapable of reproducing or emerging from a host to an adult. Thus, there may

be instances where you will see insects on your fruit; however, if they've been treated, they are not harmful to you or the fruit.

**Q. How does the irradiation process affect the pests?**

**A.** The energy waves produced during the irradiation process physically breaks the molecular structure of the pests' DNA, killing or sterilizing them. However, at specified doses, the structure of the atom is not affected.

**Q. Is it safe to eat irradiated fruits and/or vegetables?**

**A.** Yes. The FDA has evaluated the safety of this technology over the last 40 years and has found irradiation to be safe under a variety of conditions and has therefore approved its use for many foods. The agency determined that the process is safe and effective in decreasing or eliminating harmful bacteria, insects, and parasites. In certain fruits and vegetables it inhibits sprouting and delays ripening, which allows for a longer shelf life.

Food irradiation is currently used in more than 50 countries to control plant pests and is approved by the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and many other organizations around the world. Although food irradiation has been in existence since the 1950s, scientists have just recently begun focusing on its ability to control harmful pests and diseases associated with fruits and vegetables.

**Q. How do I know if my food has been irradiated?**

**A.** The FDA requires that irradiated foods include labeling with either the statement, "treated with irradiation" or "treated by irradiation" along with the international symbol for irradiation, called the Radura.

**Q. Where can I find out more information on this subject?**

**A.** To learn more about imports of mangoes from Pakistan into the United States, please visit the APHIS Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/plant\\_imports/domestic-irradiation/PakistanMango/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_imports/domestic-irradiation/PakistanMango/).

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