

## UPDATE: REGULATORY POLICIES FOR THE USE OF IRRADIATION AS A PHYTOSANITARY TREATMENT

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The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to expand the regulatory framework for the authorization of irradiation as an alternative technology for phytosanitary treatments. Current initiatives focus on the adoption of generic doses and proposals to provide authorizations for both specific and general treatments.

In May, APHIS published a Federal Register Notice of Policy titled "The Application of Irradiation to Phytosanitary Problems." This began to formalize the policies that had been under development in Position Discussion Documents I-IV since October, 1994. The Notice of Policy brings relatively firm policies, procedures, and positions into a broad public forum to encourage further dialogue and to expand the availability of information.

The publication of the policy notice was followed by a proposal to allow for the treatment of certain Hawaiian fruits on the mainland. This proposed rule would also adjust the dose to 250 Gy in accordance with the generic doses being adopted by APHIS for fruit flies. The comment period for the proposal closed in September and comments are under review.

APHIS has also completed its review of research data supporting a universal treatment for logs, lumber, and unmanufactured wood products. A dose of 7 kGy is being recommended. The adoption of this dose as a universal treatment for raw wood products will probably be published as a notice before the end of the year.

Other regulatory initiatives involve ongoing efforts to design a regulatory mechanism that will allow treatments to become available more quickly, as well as the review of several requests for authorizations. These include proposals for the routine treatment of cut flowers, fresh mangos and avocados, figs, grain (for fungi), and the devitalization of certain regulated seed.

In addition, APHIS has been working with the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) to draft a Regional Phytosanitary Standard for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment. This document was based largely on the Position Discussion Documents done by APHIS and has been well received by our NAPPO partners, Canada and Mexico. It is likely that the standard will be adopted by NAPPO before the end of the year. (Copies are available from APHIS through the author's office.)

Plans for the near future include continued progress on regulatory initiatives, an irradiation workshop for plant quarantine personnel, and accelerated work toward identifying the data and needed research for additional dose recommendations, particularly for generic doses.