

# Rules and Regulations

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

#### 7 CFR Part 318

[Docket No. 03-062-1]

#### Irradiation of Sweetpotatoes From Hawaii

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Interim rule and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We are amending the regulations to provide for the use of irradiation as a treatment for sweetpotatoes to be moved interstate from Hawaii. The sweetpotatoes will also have to meet certain additional requirements, including inspection and packaging requirements. This action provides for the use of irradiation as an alternative to methyl bromide for the treatment of sweetpotatoes moving interstate from Hawaii.

**DATES:** This interim rule is effective June 26, 2003. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before August 25, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 03-062-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 03-062-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to [regulations@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:regulations@aphis.usda.gov). Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 03-062-1" on the subject line.

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. Inder P. 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 part 318 prohibit or restrict the interstate movement of fruits, vegetables, and certain other articles from Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam to prevent the introduction and dissemination of plant pests into the continental United States.

The regulations in part 318, "Subpart—Sweetpotatoes" (§§ 318.30 and 318.30a, referred to below as the regulations) quarantine Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands because of the sweetpotato scarabee (*Euscepes postfasciatus* Fairm. [Coleoptera: Cucurliionidae], also known as the West Indian sweetpotato weevil) and the sweetpotato stem borer (*Omphisa anastomosalis* Guen. [Lepidoptera: Crambidae], also known as the sweetpotato vine borer) and restricts the interstate movement of sweetpotatoes (*Ipomoea batatas* Poir.) from those places.

The regulations have provided that sweetpotatoes may be moved interstate from Hawaii only if they have been subjected to fumigation with methyl bromide or they are being moved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for scientific or experimental purposes. In this interim rule, we are adding treatment with irradiation as an alternative to fumigation with methyl

bromide. Specifically, sweetpotatoes from Hawaii will be eligible for interstate movement if they are irradiated with a minimum dose of 400 Gy (40 krad) at an approved facility. We have determined that this dose will neutralize the pests of concern.

A pest risk assessment completed by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in 2002 and updated in May 2003 identified five pests of concern that could be spread from Hawaii to the rest of the United States by the interstate movement of sweetpotatoes: The two pests already named in the regulations, the sweetpotato scarabee and the sweetpotato stem borer; the gray pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* (Homoptera: Pseudococcidae); the ginger weevil, *Elytrotreinus subtruncatus* (Coleoptera: Cucurliionidae); and the Kona coffee root-knot nematode, *Meloidogyne konaensis* (Tylenchida: Heteroderidae). Copies of this risk assessment may be requested from the person listed under

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Three of these pests, the ginger weevil, the sweetpotato scarabee, and the sweetpotato stem borer, are internal pests, meaning that visual inspection would not be an effective means to intercept them; thus, they must be neutralized by treatment. We believe that irradiation at 400 Gy (40 krad) is an effective alternative to the methyl bromide treatment currently prescribed by the regulations to control these pests. No specific research has been completed on the irradiation dose necessary to neutralize the ginger weevil, the sweetpotato scarabee, or the sweetpotato stem borer. However, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Guidelines for the Use of Irradiation as a Phytosanitary Measure (ISPM Publication No. 18) recommends minimum doses between 50 and 400 Gy (5 and 40 krad) for all plant pests except stored product moths and nematodes. For stored product beetles of the family Coleoptera, such as the sweetpotato scarabee and the ginger weevil, the recommended minimum dose range to sterilize actively reproducing adults is 50 to 400 Gy (5 to 40 krad). For borers of the family Lepidoptera, such as the sweetpotato stem borer, the recommended minimum dose range to prevent adult development from late larva is 100 to 280 Gy (10 to 28 krad).