



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service International Services

THE NEWS BUG

Protecting America's Agriculture

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The Pre-clearance Program and APHIS' mission in Jamaica

Our Newsletter

USDA-APHIS-IS in Jamaica is launching its newsletter, the News Bug. Issues of the News Bug will be available quarterly and will highlight proper procedures, new policies and improvements in the system.

USDA's mission

The United States Department of Agriculture, USDA, operates much like the Ministry of Agriculture does in Jamaica. Since the US cannot satisfy the variety of tastes of its people it has to depend on importation of fresh fruit and vegetables. The increase in importation also increases the risk of the introduction of exotic pests into mainland US. It was therefore easier to set up pre-clearance programs in the countries of export to exclude pests at the source. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS/PPQ has the mandate in the US to ensure that pest exclusion occurs. APHIS/PPQ inspectors are stationed at US ports and borders to ensure that fresh fruits, vegetables and animal products are safe to enter United States borders.



Some Commodities exported to the United States

International Services is an arm of APHIS/PPQ, and set up to inspect commodities for harmful pests and diseases before they leave the country of origin. These proactive steps assist the exporter in several ways. If the commodities are rejected in the country of origin, they have the option to reclean and re-inspect. However, if they are rejected at the US port of

entry they would have lost money from airlifting and then have to stand the cost of fumigation, destroying or re-exporting. When goods are pre-cleared they can be cleared immediately and this minimizes the possibility of spoilage and further loss of money. Our program is called the Pre-clearance Program and is situated at the Norman Manley and Donald Sangster International Airports.

Remember that the USDA has a ZERO tolerance policy with pests and disease. Therefore if one live actionable insect is found the commodities will be rejected.



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Why can't soft fruits such as Mangos and Sweet Sop be exported to the US?

Jamaica is situated in an area called the Mediterranean Fruit Fly Region. This means that Jamaica MAY have the very dangerous pest Mediterranean Fruit Fly which feeds on soft fruits such as mangos, sweet sop and plums. Mediterranean Fruit Fly, or Medfly for short, can damage entire fruit crops such as citrus, apples and pears in the US which gives APHIS the drive to make every effort to prevent the pest from entering the US. The insect lays its eggs in the fruit and the worms eat through the flesh.

Until we find out if Jamaica does not have Medfly, all fresh fruits have to be banned. In order to export to the US, either one of two options can be explored. Hot Water Treatment, which is very expensive to set up, is one option. The Exotic Fruit Fly Trapping and Pest Surveillance is the other option. If pest surveillance is carried out and the Medfly is found to be absent from Jamaica then the market in the US and even Japan will open up to us.

This surveillance is currently being carried out by RADA personnel. The traps which attract the flies for the pest surveillance were provided by APHIS but training and execution of the surveillance will be carried out by RADA extension officers. The training of the officers was done in Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay by Mr. Phillip Chung. The survey will be island wide and will be extend over a period of many years.



One of the training sessions for the Exotic Fruit Fly Trapping Program

Fumigation facilities in Montego Bay

Fumigation is the process of releasing and dispersing a toxic chemical e.g. Methyl Bromide in such a way that it reaches the target organism (s) in a gaseous state.

It is a mandatory USDA policy that yams, peppers and thyme entering the United States from Jamaica be fumigated with MeBr before entry of the product on the market. These commodities are considered to have high pest risk. The fumigant will kill any of these pests.



Export facility in Montego Bay (photo: Hubert Holness)

Unfortunately, fumigation is not done in Montego Bay as the only facility is in Kingston. Realizing the obvious need for the facility in the West, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Jamaica Exporters Association have finalized plans to construct one.

Fumigation of the named commodities will increase export volume to the US as Western Parishes produced most of them.

Exporters will be happy to have the facility in Montego Bay as it will result in reduced loss from spoilage, reduced cost for transportation and overheads. This will in turn reduce the cost of the commodities therefore making the products more competitive on the US market.



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The Exporter and the Exported

Trout Hall and Advanced Farms Technologies Ltd. are the top producers who use the Pre-clearance Program for 2000. They export UGLI® tangelo and Papayas from Kingston and Montego Bay respectively.

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Advanced Farms Technologies Ltd.

The Wonderful Tropical Fruit - Papaya

Papayas are bright orange in colour with tiny black seeds in the middle. The fruit contains the enzyme Papain that is helpful for digestive problems. The fruit reaches the consumer within two days of reaping to ensure freshness. Advanced Farms Technologies Ltd. exported 3.7 million pounds of Papaya last year. The company employs 120 persons and is on its way to receiving HACCP accreditation, thus ensuring the safety of its consumers and employees.



Papayas from Advanced Farms Technologies Ltd.

Trout Hall Ltd.

UGLI[®] is in the eye of the Beholder



UGLI[®] tangelo from Trout Hall Ltd.

UGLI[®] tangelo is a classical fairytale fruit, ugly on the outside but soft on the inside.

The fruit was discovered growing wild in Jamaica more than seventy years ago. It was then developed as a hybrid crossing grapefruit, Seville orange and tangerine and as such is big in size and peels off easily.

The fruit has a wonderful texture and flavour and can be served in a number of recipes including UGLI[®] souffle and UGLI[®] Duckling. With credentials like these it is clear that being UGLI[®] isn't so ugly after all.

Disclaimer: The United States Department of Agriculture does not endorse any product or company. Therefore, this feature is only for information purposes and cannot be used as advertisement or accreditation of this company.



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