

11/1/2024

APHIS Decision on Rugose

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The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced a Federal Order this summer updating the regulations around safely deregulating the allowance of tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV)-positive tomatoes and peppers for consumption, an important step in protecting the domestic tomato and pepper industries.

The decision was based on an August 2023 analysis that concluded “ToBRFV is unlikely to reach commercial production areas in the United States through fruit brought to market for consumption. Rather, the virus is likely to reach U.S. production areas via the propagative plant materials pathway,” and under the new regulations, APHIS will continue to safeguard propagative materials, but will now allow producers to market fruit from facilities with positive rugose fruit virus detections rather than resorting to crop destruction.

APHIS offers a couple of documents that can help clarify further. To read the Federal Order and a set of FAQs on imports, visit

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-imports/how-to-import/import-federal-orders>

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-imports/how-to-import/import-federal-orders/tomato-brown-rugose-fruit-virus-federal-import>