

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Importation of Hass Avocados
Michoacan, Mexico
OMB 0579-0129

EXPLANATION OF TITLE CHANGE

The title for this collection has changed from Importation of Hass Avocados from Mexico to “Importation of Hass Avocados from Michoacan, Mexico” to make it specific to the location of importation.

A. JUSTIFICATION

April 2014

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for preventing plant pests and noxious weeds from entering the United States, preventing the spread of pests and weeds new to the United States or not known to be widely distributed in the United States, and eradicating those imported pests and weeds when eradication is feasible.

Under the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701–et seq.), the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to prohibit or restrict the importation, entry, or movement of plants and plant pests, to prevent the introduction of plant pests into the United States or their dissemination within the United States.

The regulations in “Subpart-Fruits and Vegetables” (7 CFR Part 319.56-1 through 319.56-61, referred to as the regulations) prohibit or restrict the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States from certain parts of the world to prevent the introduction and dissemination of plant pests that are new to or not widely distributed within the United States.

APHIS allows fresh Hass avocados grown in approved orchards in Michoacan, Mexico, to be imported into the United States under certain conditions. APHIS collects information to ensure that fresh Hass avocados from Mexico do not harbor insect pests (including Avocado stem weevils, seed weevils, and seed moths) that, if introduced into the United States, could inflict severe damage upon United States agriculture.

APHIS collects information from a variety of individuals, both within and outside of the United States, who are involved in the importation of Hass avocados into the United States.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

APHIS uses the following information activities to prohibit or restrict the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States from certain parts of the world to prevent the introduction and dissemination of plant pests that are new to or not widely distributed within the United States.

Trust Fund (foreign government) The avocados may be imported only if the Mexican avocado industry association representing Mexican avocado growers, packers, and exporters has entered into a trust fund agreement with APHIS for that shipping season in accordance with §319.30(b).

Application for Permit to Import Plants or Plant Products (PPQ Form 587) (business)

Importers of Mexican Hass avocados must obtain a permit from APHIS before importing the fruit. The permit allows APHIS to inform the permittee of the requirements and conditions for importing Mexican Hass avocados. The permit also allows APHIS to restrict importation to areas of the United States where climatic conditions preclude the establishment of insect pests from Mexico.

Workplan (foreign government)

The Mexican national plant protection organization (NPPO) must provide an annual work plan to APHIS that details the activities that the Mexican NPPO will, subject to APHIS' approval of the work plan, carry out to meet the requirements of this section 319.56-30(2) (c).

Marking of field boxes with orchard registration number (business)

Harvested avocados must be placed in field boxes or containers of field boxes that are marked to show the registration number of the orchard.

Field Record to accompany fruit from orchard to packing house (business)

The avocados must be protected from fruit fly infestation during their movement from the orchard to the packinghouse and must be accompanied by a field record indicating that the avocados originated from a certified orchard.

Recordkeeping

Participating facilities must maintain records regarding trap placement and Medfly captures. The information APHIS collects serves as the supporting documentation

needed to confirm that Hass avocados have been produced in accordance with the conditions set forth in the regulations. These records must be maintained for a period of one year.

Fruit must be stickered with Sanidad Vegetal registration number for packing house (business)

Prior to being packed in boxes, each avocado fruit must be cleaned of all stems, leaves, and other portions of plants and labeled with a sticker that bears the Sanidad Vegetal registration number of the packinghouse.

Box marking w/grower, packinghouse, etc. (business)

The avocados must be packed in clean, new boxes, or clean plastic reusable crates. The boxes or crates must be clearly marked with the identity of the grower, packinghouse, and exporter.

Phytosanitary Certificate with declaration certifying that conditions have been met (foreign government)

All shipments of avocados must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the NPPO certifying that the conditions specified in section 319.56-30 have been met.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

PPQ Form 587 is posted on the following website:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/PPQ587.pdf>

A trust fund can be automated by the government in which the articles are produced. Funds can also be transferred via computer to APHIS.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.

The information APHIS collects is exclusive to its mission to prevent the introduction of plant pests and plant diseases into the United States. The information is not available from any other source.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The information APHIS collects is the minimum needed to protect the United States from infestation by avocado stem weevils, seed weevils, and seed moths. APHIS has determined 90 percent of the respondents are small entities.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Failing to collect this information would compromise APHIS' ability to ensure that fresh Hass avocados from Mexico are not harboring destructive insect pests that could cause millions of dollars in damage to U.S. agriculture. Failing to collect this information would also make it much more difficult to ensure that fresh Hass avocados from Mexico are shipped only to approved States, and not to areas in the southern and western United States where insect pests from Mexico could successfully establish themselves.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**

- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

No special circumstances exist that require this collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the data and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.

Productive consultations occurred in 2014 with the following individuals:

Paul Litowich
President
Ben-Bud Growers, Incorporated
One North Federal Highway
Suite 203
Boca Raton, Florida 33432
561-347-3100

Lecil Cole
Chairman of the Board
Calavo Growers Incorporated
1141A Cummings Road
Santa Paula, California 93060
805-525-1245

Scott Bauwens
Director of Field Operations
West Pak Avocado Incorporated
42322 Avenida Alvarado
Temecula, California 92590
951-451-6274

On Friday, February 21, 2014, pages 9874-9875, APHIS published in the Federal Register, a 60-day notice seeking public comments on its plans to request a 3-year renewal of this collection of information. No comments from the public were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. Any and all information obtained in this collection shall not be disclosed except in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and others that are considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection activity asks no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

See APHIS Form 71 for hour burden estimates. These estimates were developed using historical data, calculated average number of permits requested, and discussions with importers and shippers of Hass avocados.

. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

See APHIS Form 71 for hour burden estimates. Mexican plant health officials, shippers, and importers of Hass avocados. APHIS estimates the total annualized cost to these respondents to be \$2,111,160.

APHIS arrived at this figure by multiplying the total burdens hours by the average hourly wage of the above respondents. (105,558 X \$20.00 = \$2,111,160). The hourly wage was provided per discussions between Animal Plant Health officials and Mexican officials.

\$20.00 is the hourly rate derived from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2012 Report - Occupational Employment and Wages in the United States. See <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ocwage.pdf>

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in item 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There is no annual cost burden associated with capital and start-up costs, maintenance costs, and purchase of services in connection with this program.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expenses that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

See APHIS Form 79 for annualized cost to the Federal Government. Annual cost to the Government is \$2,908.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

There is no change in burden for this 3-year renewal.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

APHIS has no plans to tabulate or publish the information APHIS collects.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collections, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

PPQ Form 587 is used in 8 collections; therefore, it is not practical to include an OMB expiration date because of the various expiration dates for each collection. APHIS is seeking approval to not display the OMB expiration date on this form.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”

APHIS is able to certify compliance with all the provisions in the Act.