



Proposed CFIA Changes to Border Processing of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

On June 29, 2010, Carol Osmond, I.E.Canada's Vice President, Policy participated in a stakeholder consultation with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on proposed changes to border requirements and processing under the CFIA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Participants included representatives of associations representing importers and customs brokers, as well as the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). The proposed changes are as follows:

1. Importers would no longer be required to present a hard copy of the Confirmation of Sale (COS) when the release request is presented electronically through electronic data interchange (EDI) using the Other Government Department (OGD) service option. Importers will have to maintain the COS in their records and be prepared to present it upon the request of CFIA. This change in requirements appears to be catching up with what has become industry practice. Where the release request is presented in paper form, the COS will have to be presented.
2. The license number of the importer under the Licensing and Arbitration Regulations or the importer's member number through the Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) will have to be included in the data elements submitted to CFIA through EDI, or if EDI is not used on the paper documents presented at time of release.
3. Changes will be made to the AIRS system to include new data elements for certain products - currently only leafy greens from California and cantaloupe from Mexico - that are now being provided on the COS.

One issue that arose during the course of the meeting that requires further analysis by CFIA relates to non-resident importers. Non-resident importers are not able to obtain a licence number, but may obtain a DRC number. One of the issues that arises is whether a non-resident importer will be able to provide the licence number of the Canadian consignee and the practical implications that this raises both for CFIA and the trade community.

CFIA is proposing to make these changes in early fall of 2010 with a notice to all licensees notifying them of the change and the specific start date at least one month in advance. Customs brokers participating in the meeting cautioned, however, that if any of the changes will require systems changes, a minimum of six months notice will be required.

CFIA has committed to organizing a follow up call with industry stakeholders.

If you have any questions regarding these proposed changes by CFIA, please contact Carol Osmond, Vice President, Policy at cosmond@iecanada.com.