



FEDERAL ISSUE: QUARANTINE-37: DEFENSE AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PESTS AND DISEASES

POSITION: FNGLA insists the scientific foundation and biological integrity of Quarantine-37 must never be compromised because to do otherwise will dramatically increase the risk of introducing new, damaging exotic pests and diseases.

BACKGROUND: Quarantine-37 (Q-37) is a longstanding federal quarantine regulating the importation of nursery plants, roots, bulbs, seeds and other plant products into the United States. It is a scientifically sound and biologically-based barrier designed to minimize the threat of introducing new, damaging exotic pests and diseases into this country. With limited exceptions, Q-37 prohibits the importation of plants established in soil or growing media because such more easily contain hidden pests and diseases that may evade detection.

USDA and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative are under increasing foreign pressure to relax Q-37 and allow more types of plants in soil or other growing media to be imported into this country. However, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is under increasing domestic pressure to tighten our borders for national security purposes to guard against the introduction of biological threats posed by exotic pests and diseases.

FNGLA's position is unshakeable: the scientific foundation and biological integrity of Quarantine-37 must never be compromised. It is the industry's first line of defense against the introduction of exotic pests and diseases that may harm the nursery and landscape industry and place at risk other segments of agriculture -- and all of Florida.

FNGLA insists all pest risk assessments conducted by USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) must be full and comprehensive. When conducting risk assessments, APHIS must fill any gaps in scientific expertise and literature and must consider sentinel areas, such as Florida, most at immediate risk of exotic pest and disease introductions. Incomplete risk assessments pose unacceptable biological risks not only to Florida's nursery and landscape industry, but all agricultural production in the U.S.