

China modifies inspection rule aimed at Zika

The U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service said China has decided that vessels originating from the United States, other than the state of Florida, do not require disinsection certification.

By [Chris Dupin](#) | Wednesday, September 07, 2016

China has now decided that vessels originating from the United States, other than the state of Florida, do not require disinsection certification, according to an [update from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's \(USDA\) Foreign Agricultural Service \(FAS\)](#).

"There is a great relief among our membership," said Peter Friedmann, executive director of the Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC), a group that represents U.S. exporters of farm and forest products. "There was a lot of energy put into finding means of compliance - fumigators, identifying the kinds of chemical that would be acceptable, and locations where this could be done. There's great relief that this will not have to be done now."

China began requiring shipments from U.S. states to present certificates proving disinsection (treatment to eliminate insects) on Aug. 2 after the World Health Organization's (WHO) listing of the United States as a country reporting mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission. Previously, the only places in the U.S. from which China was requiring inspections were Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A notice from the USDA's FAS said, "On Sept. 2, China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) stated that it has decided to regionalize its Zika requirements for shipments of cargo from the United States based on a risk-assessment performed by AQSIQ, using data supplied by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). AQSIQ experts determined that due to the low risk of Zika transmission through shipments of cargo, vessels originating from the United States, other than the state of Florida, do not require disinsection certification."

FAS added, "However, if during the course of routine sampling and inspection, local CIQ officials discover any adult mosquitoes, eggs, larva or infected cases, the vessel and its contents will be subject to the full Zika requirements described below. Also, if a vessel loads or unloads in Florida or a Zika infected country, it is subject to the full requirements."

FAS however, cautioned its update "is not official USDA guidance" and that "final import approval of any product is subject to the importing country's rules and regulations as interpreted by border officials at the time of product entry."

Abigail Struxness, program manager for AgTC, said U.S. exporters are closely watching individual ports in China "to make sure they're aware of the new terms and they are not accidentally enforcing something that no longer applies."

As of Aug. 31, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control said there were 2,722 cases of Zika in the U.S., with 2,686 associated with travel, 35 locally transmitted and one acquired in a laboratory. In U.S. territories, there were 14,110 cases, 14,059 locally acquired and 51 associated with travel.