Declaration of Emergency

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry
Office Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Horticulture and Quarantine Programs

Guava Root Knot Nematode Quarantine
(LAC 7:XV.171)

In accordance with the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, La. R.S. 49:953 (B), and the authority of the state entomologist under the provisions of R.S. 3:1652, and in order to avoid a lapse in coverage until a permanent rule is in effect, notice is hereby given that Department of Agriculture and Forestry ("Department") is, by emergency rule, amending LAC 7:XV.171. The amendments to this rule will allow sweet potatoes for processing from quarantined areas into Louisiana under special permit.

The Department previously adopted the Guava Root Knot Nematode (GRKN) quarantine which restricts the movement of sweet potatoes into Louisiana. Excessive rainfall during the 2019 fall harvest season has caused a hardship on sweet potato production which will likely affect the welfare of the sweet potato processing industry in Louisiana if measures are not taken to mitigate the situation. A shortage of sweet potatoes caused by adverse environmental conditions, along with the GRKN quarantine currently in place, has limited the amount of sweet potatoes the processing industry can source from Louisiana producers and producers from surrounding states. Due to these adverse conditions and the current GRKN quarantine, Louisiana processors will be approximately 30% short of their annual sweet potato volume needed to keep processing facilities running year round. Without the ability to purchase additional sweet potatoes from outside the mid-south region, the industry is in jeopardy of having to cease operations for several months. Employees of processing facilities may be affected by potential plant closings as it is estimated that the total cost of lost wages and benefits would amount to $2.5 million. Potential plant closings could also affect the welfare of the sweet potato industry by creating a limited market for producers to sell their sweet potatoes to processors. In 2019, sweet potato acreage in Louisiana was approximately 7,600 acres. According to Louisiana State University AgCenter, the processing market in Louisiana is a significant market and utilizes 65% of Louisiana's sweet potato crop. This declaration of emergency is required in order to provide the sweet potato processing industry an opportunity to source sweet potatoes from areas quarantined for GRKN to the processing facility under special permit issued by the Department.

This Rule shall have the force and effect of law upon signature and will remain in effect 120 days, unless renewed by the commissioner of agriculture and forestry or until permanent rules are promulgated in accordance with law.

Subchapter H. Guava Root Knot Nematode Quarantine

§171. Guava Root Knot Nematode Quarantine

A. – D.1. …

2. certified seed sweet potatoes and sweet potatoes for processing may be moved from the quarantine area into Louisiana under a Special Permit issued by Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

D.3. – F. …

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 3:1652, 3:1653.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Office of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, LR 45:1437 (October 2019).

Signed and attested to this 1st day of September 2020.

MIKE STRAIN DVM,
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY