

GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2026-19
BY THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OF PUERTO RICO

TO DECLARE A PHYTOSANITARY EMERGENCY DUE TO THE DETECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FRUIT FLY (*CERATITIS CAPITATA*), PROVIDE FOR COORDINATION WITH THE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA APHIS), AUTHORIZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHYTOSANITARY AND QUARANTINE MEASURES DETERMINED NECESSARY BY SAID AGENCY, AND PROVIDE FOR INTERAGENCY COOPERATION FOR THE CONTAINMENT AND ERADICATION OF THE PEST.

- WHEREAS:** The Department of Agriculture is governed by Reorganization Plan No. 4 of July 29, 2010, "Reorganization Plan of the Department of Agriculture of 2010," which confers upon it the responsibility of protecting Puerto Rico's agriculture and safeguarding the island's plant health.
- WHEREAS:** Act No. 93 of June 5, 1973, as amended, known as the "Plant Health Act of Puerto Rico," empowers the Secretary of Agriculture to adopt necessary measures aimed at preventing the introduction, establishment, and spread of pests and diseases that pose a threat to Puerto Rico's agriculture, including the adoption of emergency phytosanitary measures and cooperation with competent federal authorities.
- WHEREAS:** The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA APHIS), as part of its permanent surveillance and monitoring program for quarantine pests, officially confirmed the identification of specimens of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly (*Ceratitis capitata*), a quarantine pest of internationally recognized economic importance.
- WHEREAS:** The Mediterranean Fruit Fly constitutes one of the agricultural pests with the greatest economic impact in the world due to its ability to infest over two hundred and fifty (250) species of fruits and vegetables, representing a significant threat to Puerto Rico's agricultural production, particularly for crops such as mango, citrus, guava, papaya, avocado, acerola, passion fruit, starfruit, and other economically important fruit trees.
- WHEREAS:** The early detection of this pest was made possible thanks to the permanent surveillance and monitoring system implemented by USDA APHIS through trap installation and official inspections, allowing for the timely activation of phytosanitary response protocols.
- WHEREAS:** Pursuant to applicable federal legislation, USDA APHIS holds primary jurisdiction over regulatory actions related to federally significant quarantine pests, including the boundary delimitation of regulated areas, the establishment of quarantines, and the execution of official eradication programs. It is indispensable that the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico coordinate its efforts with USDA APHIS and with other state and municipal agencies to support the immediate implementation of all technical and regulatory measures necessary to contain and eradicate this pest before it becomes established in Puerto Rico.

THEREFORE: I, Irving Y. Rodríguez Torres, Secretary of Agriculture of Puerto Rico, by virtue of the powers vested in me by Reorganization Plan No. 4 of July 29, 2010, and Act No. 93 of June 5, 1973, as amended, "Plant Health Act of Puerto Rico," hereby order the following:

FIRST: DECLARATION OF PHYTOSANITARY EMERGENCY

A Phytosanitary Emergency is declared in Puerto Rico as a consequence of the official confirmation of the presence of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly (*Ceratitis capitata*), for the purpose of protecting the island's agriculture and facilitating the immediate implementation of official surveillance, delimitation, containment, and eradication measures.

SECOND: RECOGNITION OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION

It is expressly recognized that USDA APHIS is the competent federal authority to direct regulatory actions related to this quarantine pest, including the delimitation of regulated areas, the establishment of quarantines, restrictions on the movement of regulated articles, and the selection of technical control and eradication strategies.

THIRD: COOPERATION WITH USDA APHIS

The Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico shall provide USDA APHIS with all technical, operational, administrative, and logistical support necessary for the execution of official response activities. The official response activities to be carried out by USDA APHIS include, among others:

- Trapping surveillance and monitoring.
- Delimitation of affected areas.
- Inspection of agricultural markets, commercial establishments, street vendors, distribution centers, ports, airports, landfills, and any other site where a risk of spread exists.
- Sampling, diagnostics, and epidemiological investigations.
- Authorized phytosanitary treatments.
- Destruction or management of infested fruit when necessary.
- Release of sterile insects or other scientifically approved techniques as determined by USDA APHIS.

All public communications regarding this phytosanitary event must be conducted in a coordinated manner between the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico and USDA APHIS, in accordance with the communication protocols established by both agencies.

FOURTH: INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The Department of Agriculture formally requests USDA APHIS to activate the Incident Command System (ICS) to coordinate the interagency response regarding this phytosanitary event and designates technical personnel from the Department to join said command structure.

FIFTH: COLLABORATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES

Every government agency, municipality, public entity, agricultural producer, merchant, distributor, street vendor, or person handling agricultural products shall collaborate with official authorities during the execution of surveillance, inspection, monitoring, delimitation, and eradication activities authorized by USDA APHIS and the Department of Agriculture.

SIXTH: MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS

All restrictions related to the movement of host fruits, plant material, or other regulated articles within or outside the affected area shall be implemented in accordance with technical and regulatory determinations issued by USDA APHIS, with the support of the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico.

SEVENTH: EFFECTIVENESS

This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately upon its signing and shall remain in effect until modified or rendered without effect through another Administrative Order, or until USDA APHIS determines that the phytosanitary emergency has concluded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I sign and affix the seal of the Department of Agriculture of the Government of Puerto Rico, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 28 day of julio, 2026.


IRVING Y. RODRÍGUEZ TORRES
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

