

Argentine authorities have found citrus greening disease in an urban myrtle plant around 48 miles from the border of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) approved zone for lemon imports from the South American country.

Last week Argentina's National Food Safety and Quality Service (SENASA) found the disease, also known as Huanglongbing (HLB), in La Banda, Santiago del Estero, and the host plant was immediately sprayed, incinerated and its stump also sprayed with insecticide to eliminate any trace of the vector Asian citrus psyllid (ACP).

As a result, the phytosanitary conditions regarding HLB in the province of Santiago del Estero are now "under contingency", with the aim of avoiding the establishment and spread of the disease.

In addition to applications of a Plant Transit Document system, it will not be allowed to move unprocessed citrus fruit from the region to areas that are pest-free.

This is significant as this part of Santiago del Estero lies just outside the major lemon-exporting province of Tucumán, and is only an estimated 2hr 15min drive from its capital San Miguel de Tucumán.

The access arrangement for exports from Northeast Argentina (NOA) to the U.S. includes the provinces of Tucumán, Salta, Jujuy and Catamarca.

Following the detection, SENASA reminded growers and the public to be vigilant through regular monitoring of their own and neighbors' citrus plants in order to detect any HLB symptoms and contact the authorities immediately if they suspect they've found the disease.

Headline photo: SENASA

www.freshfruitportal.com



Provinces of Argentina. Map courtesy of Wikipedia.