

With Colombia now enjoying its first full year of U.S. avocado market access, exporters from one of its neighboring countries could soon receive the same privilege.

The U.S. and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced it is proposing to allow imports of fresh avocados from continental Ecuador into the U.S.

After a thorough review, APHIS said scientists had determined the fruit can be safely imported under a systems approach to protect against the introduction of pests.

In this case, the systems approach includes production site requirements, packinghouse requirements, shipment of commercial shipments only, and inspection of each shipment. Avocados that are ineligible for export under the systems approach may still be imported following approved treatment, such as irradiation.

APHIS said it would accept public comments on the proposal until August 14.

Although Ecuador is wedged in between avocado industry powerhouse Peru and up-and-comer Colombia, the country's Hass avocado sector is still relatively young.

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