



American Seed Trade Association

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NEWS RELEASE

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Brazil revises import requirements for seed, making it a feasible market

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Only a few weeks ago shipping seed to Brazil from the United States was not feasible, but thanks to Brazil's revision of its recently published Norm 36 this market is much more accessible.

Norm 36, originally published in Dec. 30, 2010, is a new Brazilian regulation that establishes general phytosanitary import requirements for seed. There is an annex for each country shipping seed to Brazil; the annex for the United States is annex 14, which lists 118 different kinds of seeds (corn wasn't one of them).

The original Norm 36 required companies to have:

- Phytosanitary certificates with declarations stating that shipments were free of all 490 Brazilian quarantine pests of concern
- Completed their own laboratory analysis for these pests
- Treated seed for arthropods with approved methods

In addition, all incoming seed shipments would be held and retested.

When the United States learned of this new publication in mid-January, the American Seed Trade Association's Ric Dunkle, senior director for seed health and trade, immediately began working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"We were completely blindsided by the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture because they didn't inform anyone of their new requirements," Dunkle says. "These new import requirements lacked technical justification and made it impossible for companies to successfully import seed to Brazil, basically shutting down the market.

"Most pests of real concern are checked for during field inspections and these burdensome requirements started creating a big problem."

Dunkle and USDA-APHIS began working with USDA-Foreign Ag Service attaches both in Washington D.C. and Brazil, as well as the Seed Association of the Americas.

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“We wrote letters to APHIS and directly to Brazil MAPA explaining that these regulations were impossible to comply with and that U.S. companies would not be able to import seed into Brazil,” says Dunkle. “We encouraged SAA members to put pressure on MAPA from their seed associations.” MAPA is Brazil’s Ministry of Agriculture.

The Brazilian Seed Association, known as ABRASEM, began working directly with MAPA. A meeting was held in late February between MAPA, ABRASEM and a number of Brazilian-based seed companies to discuss Norm 36. As a result, MAPA agreed to revise and republish Norm 36.

The revision, published March 1, 2011, states that for one year Brazil will allow field inspections in replace of laboratory testing, which should make it much easier for companies wishing to import seed into Brazil, Dunkle explains. Companies importing seed to Brazil, if they haven’t already done so, need updated import permits that reflect the new changes.

Brazil is a major market for vegetable and flower seed and also is a prime location for counter-season production of corn and soybeans. These requirements would have had a substantial impact in particular on the vegetable and flower industry. It is estimated that Brazil is a \$14 million market per year for U.S. seed companies and that number is on the low side, Dunkle says.

In the meantime, MAPA wants to work with the U.S. and others to evaluate their quarantine pests and complete the necessary risk assessments.

“During the next year, we hope Brazil will continue to make improvements to Norm 36, but this at least gives us a reasonable option to get seed into Brazil for 2011,” Dunkle says.

As it turns out Brazilians need other countries for seed. “We will be working hard to make progress between now and March 2012 so we can avoid this next year.”

For any questions or problems, contact Dunkle at 703-837-8140 or rdunkle@amseed.org.

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Writer: Julie Douglas, 703-837-8140, jdouglas@amseed.org.

Source: Ric Dunkle, 703-837-8140, rdunkle@amseed.org