



NAPPO POSITION ON SOIL MOVEMENT

The most frequent means of soil movement internationally is as a contaminant in the shipment of other regulated articles. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) does not define soil; however, the risk associated with soil is addressed in the definition of regulated article. Soil is mentioned specifically as a potential medium for harbouring or spreading pests. The IPPC definition of regulated article is:

“Any plant, plant product, storage place, packaging, conveyance, container, soil and any other organism, object or material capable of harbouring or spreading pests, deemed to require phytosanitary measures, particularly where international transportation is involved.”

From this definition it can be seen that the focus is any regulated article that might harbor pests, including soil. In the absence of an IPPC definition for soil, NAPPO has adopted a definition which recognizes that soil may consist of a combination of materials such as earth, compost, humus, manure, muck, peat, plant litter and plant debris.

The NAPPO soil definition is: “The loose surface material of the earth in which plants grow, in most cases consisting of disintegrated rock with an admixture of organic material.”

Soil, as evidenced from the international restrictions and prohibitions concerning its movement, is considered to be a high risk pathway for spreading a wide range of pests including but not limited to: bacteria, fungi, insects, nematodes and weeds. Numerous soil-borne pests can survive for many years, with or without suitable hosts. Some of these pests can be detected visually while the detection of others requires sophisticated diagnostics.

Based on well-documented evidence from interception reports and published literature, most National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) prohibit the movement of large quantities of soil that has not been treated to reduce the pest risk to an acceptable level. The acceptability of soil as a contaminant of other regulated articles will depend on the limits established by the NPPO of the importing country.

In the absence of a regional or international standard on soil as a contaminant of regulated articles, commodity specific bilateral agreements may be required.

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24 April, 2003
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