Snails and Slugs

Last Modified:

A PPQ 526 plant pest permit is required for the importation or interstate movement of mollusks that feed upon or infest plants or plant products.

USDA permits are issued under the authority of 7 CFR 330. USDA may permit the interstate movement of snails or slugs for research purposes, educational use in classrooms, display in zoos as well as the importation for research and aquatic hobby trade. Authorization depends upon factors such as the risk the species poses if released to the environment, the level of containment at the research facility and the risk of contaminants during importation.

- Apply for a Permit - Use PPQ Form 526, Application for permit to move live plant pests or noxious weeds.

Related Information

Live snails or slugs moved under the authority of PPQ Plant Pest Permits must not be released into the environment.

Achatinine snails including the genera *Achatina*, *Archachatina and Lissachatina* (including *Lissachatina fulica*, the giant African snail), are specifically prohibited for both interstate movement and importation into the United States. These snails poses

a threat to both humans and plants. This snail species group is not only strictly prohibited from entering the United States but is safeguarded when discovered. For more information related to this risk, see the following:

- The Threat — Giant African Snails
- Giant African Snail
- CDC Fact Sheet on *Angiostrongylus* Infections

Decollate snails (*Rumina decollata*) and aquatic snails in the family Ampullaridae (*e.g., Pomacea canaliculata*, channeled apple snail), with one exception, may not be imported or moved interstate except for research purposes into an APHIS inspected containment facility. One species in the family Ampullaridae, *Pomacea diffusa* (formerly *bridgesii*) may move interstate without a permit because these snails are not known to be agricultural pests but are primarily algae feeders. An official PPQ-issued letter (a letter of no-jurisdiction or a letter of no permit required) issued in response to a PPQ 526 application and printed on ePermits USDA letterhead is required for importing non-plant pest aquatic snails. Such shipments require official PPQ identification in order to verify species and examine shipments for contaminants that are agricultural pests. Diseased snails that carry or vector human or livestock diseases only may be imported with only a CDC (Centers for Disease Control) permit.

Live snails cannot be imported into the United States for human consumption. Cooked, frozen or otherwise processed snails may be imported for this purpose. USDA does not require permits for dead snails or slugs. Under 7 CFR 330.200, “biological specimens of plant pests, in preservative or dried, may be imported without further restriction under this part, but subject to inspection on arrival in the United States to confirm the nature of the material and freedom from risk of plant pest dissemination.” The packages cannot contain any plant material, soil or other plant pests.

USDA will authorize interstate movement of live snails for the purpose of establishing a snail farm only in those instances where an applicant has received approval from their State Agricultural Official and the APHIS State Plant Health Director. The permit applicant must obtain, in writing, State Agricultural Official concurrence before a movement permit will be issued.

Shipping Requirements for Importing Regulated Organisms Requiring Red and White Labels

Information about Inspections

Snails and Slugs FAQ's

View a list of the commonly asked questions and concerns associated with the application process for the importation of live snails and slugs.

Mollusk Decision Matrix (56.13 KB)

The Mollusk Decision Matrix may be used as a guideline for educators when deciding which snails or slugs to use in their classroom. The matrix lists ten snail and slug species and the specific states in which the USDA will authorize interstate movement. Please note that this matrix is subject to change at any time if the USDA receives new information on plant pest characteristic and pest status. Species may be removed from any given state at any time. Contact your State Plant Regulatory Office or the Pest Permit Evaluation Unit when in doubt.

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