

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

In re:) P.Q. Docket No. 03-0004
)
Alfredo Gonzalez,)
)
)
Respondent) DECISION and ORDER
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)

This is an administrative proceeding for the assessment of a civil penalty for a violation of the regulations governing the prohibition of the importation of avocados from Mexico into the United States (7 C.F.R. § 319.56 et seq.) hereinafter referred to as the regulations, in accordance with the Rules of Practice in 7 C.F.R. §§ 1.130 et seq. and 380.1 et seq.

This proceeding was instituted under the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. §§ 7701-7772)(Act), by a complaint filed by the Acting Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on October 29, 2002, alleging that respondent Alfredo Gonzalez violated the Act and regulations promulgated under the Acts (7 C.F.R. § 319.56 et seq.).

The complaint sought civil penalties as authorized by section 424 of the Plant Protection Act

(7 U.S.C. § 7734). This complaint specifically alleged that on three different occasions respondent illegally imported large quantities of fresh Hass avocados from Mexico into the United States.

The respondent failed to file an answer within the time prescribed in 7 C.F.R. § 1.136(a). Section 1.136(c) of the Rules of Practice (7 C.F.R. § 1.136(c)) provides that the failure to file an answer within the time provided under 7 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) shall be deemed an admission of the allegations in the complaint. Further, the failure to file an answer constitutes a waiver of hearing. (7 C.F.R. § 1.139). Accordingly, the material allegations in the complaint are adopted and set forth in this Default Decision as the Findings of Fact, and this Decision is issued pursuant to section 1.139 of the Rules of Practice applicable to this proceeding. (7 C.F.R. § 1.139).

Findings of Fact

1. Alfredo Gonzalez, hereinafter referred to as respondent, is an individual with a mailing address of 160 W. San Ysidro Blvd. A, San Ysidro, California 92173.

2. On or about July 29, 1998, at San Ysidro, California, the respondent imported approximately 169 fresh Hass avocados from Mexico into the United States in violation of 7 C.F.R. §§ 319.56(c) and 319.56-2ff, because importation of such avocados into the United States is prohibited except under specific conditions.

3. On or about February 23, 2000, at San Ysidro, California, the respondent imported approximately 15 boxes of fresh Hass avocados from Mexico into the United States in violation of 7 C.F.R. §§ 319.56(c) and 319.56-2ff, because importation of such avocados into the United States is prohibited except under specific conditions.

4. On or about February 29, 2000, at Otay Mesa, California, the respondent imported approximately 12 boxes of fresh Hass avocados from Mexico into the United States in violation of 7 C.F.R. §§ 319.56(c) and 319.56-2ff, because importation of such avocados into the United States is prohibited except under specific conditions.

Conclusion

By reason of the Findings of Fact set forth above, the respondent(s) has violated the Act and the regulations issued under the Act (7 C.F.R. § 319.56 et seq). Therefore, the following Order is issued.

Order

The respondent, Alfredo Gonzalez, is assessed a civil penalty of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00). The respondent shall pay three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) as a civil penalty.

This civil penalty shall be payable to the "Treasurer of the United States" by certified check or money order, and shall be forwarded within thirty (30) days from the effective date of this Order to:

United States Department of Agriculture
APHIS Field Servicing Office
Accounting Section
P.O. Box 3334
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403

Respondent shall indicate on the certified check or money order that payment is in reference to P.Q. Docket No. 03-0004

This order shall have the same force and effect as if entered after a full hearing and shall be final and effective thirty five (35) days after service of this Default Decision and Order upon respondent, unless there is an appeal to the Judicial Officer pursuant to 7 C.F.R. § 1.145 of the Rules of Practice.

Done at Washington, D.C.

this 2nd day of July, 2004

Marc R. Hillson

Chief Administrative Law Judge