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## Philippines 'delaying US imports'

Report reveals pest risk analyses taking up to five years, as US vegetable imports fall by US\$2.57m between 2011 and 2012



**A**n arm of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has raised concerns about the length of time Philippine officials are taking to approve US vegetable imports.

In its annual report, issued 1 April, the office of the US Trade Representative said it took five years — from 2006 to 2011 — for the Philippines to perform pest risk analyses on US broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, carrots, cabbage and celery. An import risk analysis on US potatoes was requested in 2009 and was also completed in 2011.

“As has been highlighted in previous years, foreign governments continue to impose discriminatory or otherwise unwarranted measures on US exports in the guise of ensuring human, animal, or plant safety,” said the trade report.

Despite the lengthy approval process, the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has reported food and beverage exports to the Philippines doubled between 2009 and 2012. However, the FAS revealed fresh vegetable exports to the Philippines fell from US\$5.9m in 2011, to US\$3.3m in 2012.

The trade report concluded the Philippines allowed “a limited amount of these vegetables to enter the country, on a case-by-case basis, for ‘high-end markets,’ such as hotels, restaurants, and airline companies.”