

USDA denies request to import biotech blue chrysanthemums from Japan

Chrysanthemums genetically engineered to produce blue flowers cannot be freely imported into the U.S. and traded as non-regulated crops under a new USDA decision.

Most requests for non-regulated status for genetically-altered crops in recent years have met with approval from the agency's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service [APHIS], so the recent rejection of Suntory Flowers Limited's application to import cut flowers is rare.

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The agency has allowed for the importation of two genetically engineered cut flowers and one fruit under its jurisdiction — baby's breath, roses and pineapples — because the possibility for propagation in the U.S. was remote, [said Rick Coker, public affairs specialist with APHIS].

"Put another way if you were to take all four of these and throw them on top of a compost pile, the only one capable of propagation is the chrysanthemum," he said in an email.

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Coker said the timing of Suntory's inquiry was "unfortunate" because APHIS is currently considering revised rules for biotechnology under which the blue chrysanthemums "almost certainly would not be regulated."

Suntory, which is based in Japan, is still deliberating the USDA's response, including its offer to consider additional information that could alleviate the agency's concerns, said Cory Sanchez, the company's representative in the U.S.

"They did leave the door open for us," he said.

Read full, original article: [USDA rejects biotech blue chrysanthemum request](#)