

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Custom and Border Protection Inspects Cut Flowers Inside First Ghost Flight to San Juan, Puerto Rico

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Agricultural Specialists inspected Wednesday the first “Ghost Flight” to arrive to the Luis Munoz Marin International Airport, full of cut flowers from Colombia.

A “Ghost Flight” is a planned air route that commercial airlines continue to fly regardless of having few or no passengers.

“Although these items appear to be harmless, there could be hidden threats in compartments and containers of fresh items that could seriously threaten U.S. agriculture, our natural resources and our economy,” stated Leida Colon, Assistant

Director of Field Operations-Trade for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

The Colombian carrier arrived to San Juan filled with a consignment of 1,733 boxes of cut flowers ahead of the Mother's day celebration Sunday May 10.

Several other "ghost flights" are scheduled by commercial aircraft importing cargo into the island.

Millions of pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, herbs, and other items enter via commercial shipments from other countries every year.

CBP agriculture specialists possess specialized skill sets they use to prevent the introduction of harmful exotic plant pests and foreign animal diseases, and potential ag/bio-terrorism into the United States.

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating disruptions to global commerce and CBP is constantly communicating with trade stakeholders on ways to ensure the smooth and unimpeded flow of trade and commercial activities.

CBP's San Juan Field Office continues to process cargo, international mail and express consignment packages with care and vigilance. We ask the trade community to take reasonable care during the import process.