



CBP Agriculture Specialists Ring in Chinese New Year with Operation 'Lunar Eclipse'

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Newark, N.J. – Historically, there has been a surge in prohibited agriculture products being imported into the United States over the holidays. This Chinese New Year proved to support that trend as many ethnic groups regard food products as special gifts which are considered one of the most important items they can receive from their homeland. Unfortunately, most meats, plants, fruits, and vegetables are prohibited from entering the United States.

As Asian communities in the Tri-State Area celebrated the "Year of The Ox" on January 26, CBP agriculture specialists concluded a two-week long "Operation Lunar Eclipse" which commenced on January 12.



Cooked poultry products seized from a passenger arriving at Newark International Airport from Beijing, China.

The operation focused on passengers arriving at Newark Liberty International Airport from China and Hong Kong. A total of 7,500 passengers were selected for examination during the operation. Newark's agriculture specialists K-9 teams were also primary part of the successful two week effort. CBP agriculture specialists seized 340 prohibited animal meat/products weighing more than 900 pounds, interdicted 177 prohibited plant products/materials, and issued 152 civil penalties totaling \$36,000 for failure to declare agriculture products.

Animal products including ducks, ruminant (beef products), soup mixes that contain beef, poultry, and pork were among the products seized during this operation. Plant product interdictions included litchis, mangoes, longans, squash, Jujube, dragon fruit, Citrus peel, tangerines, and hot peppers. Although the operation focused on passengers arriving from China and Hong Kong, CBP agriculture specialists remained vigilant during their daily operations and collectively issued 243 civil penalties during the 2-week operation with a total penalty revenue in the amount of \$55,000.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Director of Field Operations Robert E. Perez said, "The success of the operation can be attributed to a highly trained, extremely dedicated, multi-lingual work force.

Foreign animal and plant diseases are a significant threat to the American agriculture industry and any accidental or intentional introduction of such diseases or pest could have a devastating effect on our crops, farming industry and economy." U.S. regulations prohibit the entry of meat and meat products from regions that have animal disease epidemics. CBP agriculture specialists play a pivotal role in keeping American agriculture safe.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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