

Don't Pack a Pest

Don't Pack a Pest is a national campaign to prevent invasive species from entering the United States. Funded by USDA APHIS and U. S. Customs and Border Protection, it began as a collaboration with the Florida Department of Agriculture to protect their many ports of entry from invasive species. Today, the program exists for international travelers in multiple states including Oregon and Minnesota with the goal of encouraging academic travelers to pack smart and declare agricultural goods.

What you need to know

You are leading an agricultural-focused study abroad program and your students will encounter farms and experience rural areas--potentially purchasing agricultural goods. While we want them to have an immersive experience and bring back what they learn to share their experience with others, it is important that you encourage them to make educated choices when packing goods and souvenirs to bring home with them and be prepared to answer their concerns.

What your students might ask you

- [What are invasive species?](#)
 - Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and pathogens that cause environmental and agricultural damage, economic loss, or harm to human health
- [What constitutes "agricultural goods"?](#)
 - Food products including meat, dairy, fruits, nuts, and vegetables
 - Plants and plant materials
 - Soils
 - Teas and spices
 - Souvenirs made of wood or other natural products
 - A full list of items can be found on the [Don't Pack a Pest website](#)
- [Why is declaring items important?](#)
 - In North America, invasive species have cost at least [\\$120 billion annually](#).
 - Invasive species affect farmers' abilities to use land for grazing, damages their crops, and can make their livestock ill. Ultimately this results in higher food prices, a less secure food supply, and damage to native environments.
 - Invasive species displace native species, harm habitats, and degrade natural, managed, and agricultural landscapes
- [What does declaration and the customs process look like?](#)
 - Travelers can find and print [customs forms](#) or use digital kiosks at airports to declare any agricultural goods and souvenirs:
 - Both versions prompt options for what students can declare.
 - If students declare, they will not be penalized even if their goods are confiscated.
 - You can share your personal experiences going through customs if you feel they are helpful.

**Resources**

[Don't Pack a Pest](#)

[Customs and Border Protection: Protecting Agriculture](#)

[USDA APHIS Traveler Information](#)