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What does it take to get fresh produce from international fields to U.S. shelves, without compromising on quality, speed, or compliance?

Here are **5 essential tips** to import fresh produce successfully:

1. Know Your Product: Be Curious

If you're planning to start importing fresh produce into the United States, one of the most valuable things you can do is truly understand your product:

- 1.1 How does the product respond to different temperatures? Some fruits ripen quickly when warm; others may suffer chilling injury if they are kept too cold. Know the optimal temperature range for storage and transit.
- 1.2 What happens when it's shipped with other commodities? Ethylene-sensitive items like leafy greens don't do well near ethylene-producing fruits like bananas or avocados. Mixing the wrong products can shorten their shelf life.
- 1.3 Understanding your product characteristics, shelf life and ripening behavior, helps you make better decisions about shipping methods, packaging, and marketing timing.

2. Know if your product is on the list of permitted commodities in the US and its import regulations:

- 2.1 Visit the Agricultural Commodity Import Requirements website to find out more information: <https://acir.aphis.usda.gov/s/>
- 2.2 Research and write questions to discuss this with your customs clearance agent to comply with USDA, FDA, and CBP requirements.
- 2.3 Understand quarantine protocols, phytosanitary certificates, and permitted commodities.

At Green Goes, our passion for fresh produce drives our commitment to quality, service, and innovation. If unsure where to start, we are here to guide you in the process
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3. Review export documentation with your suppliers

- 3.1 Depending on your product and current market demand, the product can be transported into the US by Air, Truck or Ship, each mode of transportation has a document requirement at least 48 hours prior departure, make sure to check with your customs broker and logistics partner at origin.
- 3.2 Make sure shipping instructions are detailed who will be paying for the freight, is it pre-paid or collect?
- 3.3 Classify your product. Proper Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) should be entered in the documents that contain the product information this information is required for all merchandise imported into the United States. to find out more information: <https://hts.usitc.gov/>

4. Understanding the Cold Chain Logistics

- 4.1 Research the service providers for your region going into the United States and select experienced freight forwarders and carriers who specialize in perishables.
- 4.2 Time and temperature are critical—ensure proper pre-cooling, refrigerated transport, and cold storage.
- 4.3 Monitor shipments with real-time tracking and temperature loggers.

5. Understand Seasonality and Sourcing Regions

- 5.1 Examine growers/exporters carefully, focusing on quality control, traceability, and harvest schedules
- 5.2 Maintain open communication about crop updates, weather impacts, and market changes.
- 5.3 Know when and where your products are in season to maximize quality and cost-efficiency.
- 5.4 Diversify your sourcing to avoid disruptions from weather events, labor issues, or political instability.

Bonus: Build a strong network of service providers, your fresh produce import doesn't have to be painful if you are guided by experts!

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