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Drugs and produce not necessarily a good combination for smugglers

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers made a significant discovery earlier this month, intercepting 629 pounds of methamphetamine concealed within a shipment of celery. Officers uncovered 508 packages hidden among the celery with an estimated street value of \$755,000.



The incident occurred when CBP officers encountered a 34-year-old man driving a commercial tractor-trailer, seeking entry into the United States from Mexico. The driver, who held a valid border crossing card, was transporting a shipment declared as celery. Following routine procedures, CBP officers directed the driver, the tractor-trailer and its cargo to secondary inspection for a more thorough examination.

During the secondary inspection, the shipment of celery was offloaded for closer scrutiny. A CBP K-9 unit was brought in to screen the produce and quickly alerted officers to the presence of narcotics.

"Our officers' vigilance and expertise once again thwarted an attempt to smuggle narcotics disguised as everyday produce," said Rosa E. Hernandez, port director for the area port of Otay Mesa. "This discovery underscores our unwavering commitment to protecting our communities from the perils of drug trafficking."

CBP officers seized the narcotics and the commercial tractor-trailer involved in the smuggling attempt. The driver was handed over to Homeland Security Investigations for further investigation.

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