



Animal & Plant Health Agency

Explanatory Leaflet – Export certification Services

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) provides a range of services to help you to export plants, plant products (including grain and bulbs), fruit and vegetables, potatoes (including seed potatoes), seeds, soil or agricultural machinery to countries outside the European Community (EU).

This leaflet explains the type of services we provide and the standard of service we aim to deliver. It also explains the charges payable for export certification services.

Under single market arrangements different requirements apply to trade with other EU countries. If you require more information on sending plants, plant products and other material to countries within the EU see the gov.uk website.

Some plant species are considered to be endangered and imports and exports of such species (including all cacti and orchids) are subject to licences issued under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). For information please contact the APHA information line on 0844 884 4600 or go to the website: www.gov.uk/cites-controls-import-and-

[export-of-protected-species](#)

If you are still unclear about anything after reading this leaflet please do not hesitate to seek advice from your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector. Contact details can be found on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening#plant-health-offices>

A different system operates in Scotland. Information about export certification in Scotland may be obtained from:

- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspectors, Directorate (SGRPID)
Plant Health and Potatoes Branch
Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh EH14 1TY
Tel: 0131 244 6303
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantMovements/ImportsAndExports



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

1. In order to prevent the introduction of harmful pests and diseases most countries require that plants, plant products and other plant related material must meet certain plant health standards before they are allowed entry. These standards are laid down by the relevant authorities in each country and vary from country to country.
2. Most countries outside the EU require that consignments must be accompanied by a 'phytosanitary' or plant health certificate issued by the plant health authority in the exporting country. A phytosanitary certificate provides importing countries with an assurance that consignments meet the required plant health standard. Certificates are issued by the local APHA PHSI office for exports from England and Wales. Certificates for exports from Scotland are issued by SGRPID.
3. In most cases, depending on the requirements of the importing country, phytosanitary certificates can only be issued following satisfactory official inspection of the material for export. In some circumstances it may also be necessary for samples to be subject to an official laboratory examination (official examinations are carried out at the Fera Science Ltd laboratory on behalf of the APHA). The types of examinations which may be necessary are as follows:
 - examinations to detect the presence of particular pests and diseases;
 - examinations to confirm freedom from prohibited weed seeds, parasitic plants and certain plant diseases.
4. If the material you intend to export was imported into the UK with a phytosanitary certificate and has simply been stored, repacked or split up before re-export to a country outside the EU, then most countries require that the consignment be accompanied by a reforwarding phytosanitary certificate in addition to the original phytosanitary certificate. In most cases reforwarding certificates can be issued without any inspection or testing.
5. In addition to a phytosanitary certificate some countries also require that consignments be accompanied by an import permit issued by the relevant plant health authority in the importing country. Import permits often specify additional requirements, such as freedom from certain pests and diseases, and so must be obtained

before you apply for pre-export inspection or export certification.

6. We can provide information on the plant health import requirements of most countries. However, it is sometimes quicker for your importer to obtain written requirements.

What services are available?

7. In order to assist you in demonstrating that material meets the relevant plant health standards of the importing country. We provide the following services in connection with the certification of material for export:
 - Soil sampling;
 - Growing season inspections;
 - Pre-export inspection and certification (other than seeds for sowing);
 - Pre-export inspection and certification of seeds for sowing;
 - Certification of consignments of grain for export.

Soil sampling and soil freedom

8. Before plants can be exported many countries require that the soil or growing medium in which they are growing is sampled and tested to establish freedom from certain pests and diseases. Some countries also require that the roots of all plants are washed free of soil or growing medium to minimise the risk of carrying pests and diseases. Where this is required your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector will need to visit your premises at least two weeks before the export is due to take place in order to carry out soil sampling or to check that plants are free from soil.

Growing season inspections

9. In some cases a growing season inspection is required to establish freedom from pests and diseases which may not be apparent at the time of export. This often applies to plants being exported in the dormant state and to flower bulbs. In order to carry out a growing season inspection your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector may have to inspect the plants in active growth several months before the export is due to take place.

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

Pre-export inspection and certification (other than seeds for sowing but including seed potatoes)

10. In addition to any soil sampling or growing season inspections which may be required, exports of plants, grain, farm machinery and some plant products, including bulbs, fruit and vegetables (including seed and ware potatoes) require a pre-export inspection by your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector. Samples may also have to be sent to the Fera Science Ltd laboratory for examination. Your local APHA PHSI can only issue a phytosanitary certificate following a satisfactory pre-export inspection and examination.
11. Pre-export inspection is not normally necessary for exports of other plant products, including peas, beans, tea, tobacco etc. However, samples will have to be sent by the exporter to the Fera Science Ltd laboratory for examination. In such cases certificates are issued following a satisfactory test result.

Pre-export inspection and certification of seed for sowing (other than seed potatoes)

12. In most cases it is necessary for samples of seed for export to be examined by the Fera Science Ltd laboratory for the presence of seed borne pests and diseases. Samples are normally taken by a APHA Plant Health Inspector. If the seed meets the required standard, phytosanitary certificates can be issued over the course of the next 24 months for the full quantity of seed from which the samples were taken. In a few cases the importing country requires the seed consignment and/or surrounding storage area to be free from storage pests. Such inspection can be carried out by the local APHA plant health and seeds inspector.

Certification of consignments of grain for export

13. The arrangements for the issue of phytosanitary certificates for export of grain are contained in a separate leaflet GSOP1, which can be found on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grain-for-export-application-for-certification>

How do I apply for these services?

14. Apply online via eDomero, as an extra charge is made for not submitting online e.g. paper application forms, by fax, by email. Or if you can not apply online complete the relevant application form. Copies are available on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls#exports> or from your local APHA PHSI office. Return the form to your local APHA PHSI office or the Fera Science Ltd laboratory as indicated on the application form. We cannot provide any services unless we have received one of the following application forms, properly completed and signed.

- PH13 Soil sampling for Potato Cyst Nematode
- PHE86 Growing season inspections
- PHE36 Pre-export inspection and certification (other than seeds for sowing but including seed potatoes)
- PHE60 Pre-export inspection and certification of potatoes
- PHE90 Pre-export inspection and certification of seeds for sowing
- HH36A Pre-export inspection and certification of agricultural machinery
- HH91 Certification of Plant Products
- HH93 Certification of grain for export

IMPORTANT: if you require services on more than one holding and the holdings are not in the same district or adjoining districts you must make separate applications for each holding.

For these purposes a district is defined as:

in England a civil parish, or where there is no civil parish, a district ward in Wales a community.

How much will I have to pay?

15. Details of the fees for export certification services can be found on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls#fees>. There is a charge per quarter hour for all work undertaken at your premises by the APHA PHSI in connection with export inspection and certification services. There is a minimum charge for a visit.

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

16. The actual charge you will have to pay will be based on the time spent by the APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector on your premises. The charge includes an element for any sampling or scientific analysis which may be necessary to meet the importing country's plant health requirements. A separate charge will be made by the OSTs for any samples they examine. A verbal estimate of how much you may have to pay will be provided by the APHA PHSI prior to him or her undertaking the work.
17. There is a separate charge for phytosanitary certificates issued (e.g. for tobacco and other plant products) where no APHA PHSI involvement is necessary. See the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls#fees> for details.
18. All export inspection and certification charges are exempt from VAT.

What will I be charged if an APHA plant health inspector is already at my premises performing another (non- export) chargeable service?

19. You will be charged for the actual time the APHA PHSI is on your premises performing export related services. You will be charged separately at the appropriate rate for any non-export related chargeable work.

What do I pay if I require export services which do not involve a APHA PHSI's visit?

20. If you take material to be inspected and certified to the APHA PHSI's office, rather than have the APHA PHSI visit you, you will be charged for the actual time taken to carry out the inspection and certification.
21. If you visit a APHA PHSI in his/her office and require a re-forwarding certificate for material that does not require inspection you will be charged the appropriate fee as set out on gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls#fees>
22. If you require phytosanitary certificates in any other circumstances where a visit from a APHA PHSI is not required (but where other examinations or testing may be necessary) you will be charged the appropriate fee set as detailed on the . This includes certificates (and re-forwarding certificates) issued for plant products (e.g. peas, beans, tea, tobacco etc.).

Are there concessions for small exporters?

23. Yes. If you are not registered for VAT or if the value of your certified exports in the last financial year was less than £5,000 you may be eligible for reduced charges. Please see Section B: Concessions for Small Exporters.

Can I apply for various export services (e.g. growing season inspection and pre-export inspection) at the same time?

24. Yes. You may apply for different export certification services at the same time. You will be charged for the total time spent by the APHA PHSI on your premises.

What if my consignment fails inspection or testing?

25. The appropriate fee will be charged even if your consignment fails inspection or testing because we will have undertaken the same amount of work as if the consignment had not failed.

What do I pay if I am already paying for soil sampling or growing season inspections under the Plant Health Propagation Scheme (PHPS) or Seed Potato Classification Scheme (SPCS)?

26. If you have a soil sample taken or growing season inspection carried out under the PHPS or the SPCS and the testing or inspection carried out under those schemes would be adequate to meet the requirements of the country to which the plants etc. are to be exported, further sampling or inspection will not normally be necessary. Please consult your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector.

How do I pay?

1. Within 30 days you will receive an invoice giving details of the export services with which you have been provided (and other chargeable services you may have received in the same period) and the fees payable. Payment will then be due immediately.

Where export services have been supplied to private house holders, payment may be made by means of cash or a cheque made payable to Defra, will be accepted by the inspector who will issue a receipt for the required fee.

Failure to make prompt payment could result in the withholding of services in future.
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SECTION B – CONCESSIONS FOR SMALL EXPORTERS

Am I eligible for the concession?

1. You may be eligible for the small exporters' concession if you come into either of the following categories:
 - you are not registered for VAT in respect of any trade or business in plants, plant products, seeds, soil or agricultural machinery. (More precisely, you may be eligible if you are not a taxable person for the purposes of the VAT Act 1983 or, if you are a taxable person, you make no taxable supplies of plants, plant products, seeds, soil or agricultural machinery for the purposes of that Act);
or
 - the value of your certified exports or sales for certified export **was less than £5,000** in the previous financial year.
2. You may be eligible for this concession if you run a small business or if you are one of the following:
 - a private individual making a non-commercial export;
or
 - an amateur plant enthusiast;
or
 - a university or other non-commercial scientific establishment.

How much is the concession?

3. If you qualify for the concession you will be charged for export certification services at half-price. **You cannot, however, obtain services at half-price beyond a maximum total of £750 at half-price (£1500 full-price value) in any one financial year.** The first service you obtain which takes you over the £750 limit will be charged at full-rate.

How do I apply for the concession?

4. This concession is not granted automatically. If you wish to apply for services at half-price you must complete the form "Application for Export Services at Concessionary Rates" (PHE 3). Copies of PHE 3 are available on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls#exports> or from your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector.
5. You must complete the form and sign it, declaring that you are eligible for the concession and send (or give) it to your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector. This applies even if you are intending to apply for services where no inspector involvement is necessary.

When do I apply?

6. You only need to apply once during any financial year.
7. If you are an occasional exporter and you think you may be eligible you should complete form PHE 3 as soon as you can, preferably at least 4 weeks before you are likely to require your first export service of the financial year.
8. If you are a regular exporter you should complete form PHE 3 each year at the beginning of April.

Do I have to prove my eligibility?

9. You may be asked to do so. You can only qualify for services at the reduced rate if we are satisfied that you are eligible. This means that you may be asked to provide evidence. This might be, for example:
 - a copy of your usual trade receipt to demonstrate that you are not registered for VAT;
or
 - a letter from Customs and Excise attesting that your business is not registered for VAT;
or
 - copies of your business records or accounts to demonstrate that you exported less than £5,000 worth of plants etc. in the financial year. (These would be treated confidentially).

What happens if I cease to be eligible in the course of a financial year?

10. If you are receiving services at half-price because you have not been registered for VAT and you become registered for VAT during any financial year, you must inform your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector immediately in writing. From the time you become liable to be registered for VAT you are no longer eligible for the concession.
11. If you are receiving services at half-price because the value of your exports was less than £5,000 in the previous financial year and your exports exceed this limit in the current year you should also inform your local APHA plant health and seeds inspector in writing. You will continue to be eligible for the concession until the end of the current financial year but you will cease to be eligible from 1 April of the following year.

SECTION C – WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

Response

1. We aim to deliver phytosanitary certificates by the date requested, providing we receive a properly completed application form 7 working days in advance **and fully** subject to any laboratory examinations that may be required by the importing country.
2. We will always try to answer telephone calls promptly. If the first person you speak to other than the operator, cannot deal with your enquiry in full, you will be passed to someone who can. If necessary we will call you back.
3. We aim to answer all correspondence from you within 15 working days of receipt. If this is not possible, for example, where there is a need to carry out further investigations or to consult more widely, we will let you know why.
9. Please complete application forms fully. You must complete all paper forms accurately and legibly. We do our best to keep application forms as simple as possible but if you have any problems, we will do our best to help you to sort them out. We suggest you keep a copy of your application form.
10. When you receive a request for payment, please make payment as quickly as possible. Failure to pay for services provided may mean that we are unable to provide services in future.

What if you are dissatisfied with our service?

Information

4. Our objective and commitment is to work with you in a manner which is:
 - helpful
 - efficient
 - fair and courteous
5. We will identify ourselves by name in all correspondence, on the telephone and in face to face contact. All APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors carry identification and business cards and wherever appropriate will also wear name badges.
11. If you have any concerns or specific complaints about the way APHA operates or the services we provide, please refer to our complaints procedure which can be found on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/complaints-procedure>
12. **Data Protection**
Data Protection - For information on how we handle personal data please go to www.gov.uk and search 'Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter'

Consultation

6. If you have any views on the service we provide we would like to hear from you. If you think our service could be better it is important that you tell us as this will help us to get it right in the future. You can do this either over the telephone, by fax or in writing. APHA plant health and seeds inspectors, in their contact with you, may ask what you think of the service and how we might improve it.

Value for money

7. We are committed to providing export certification services in an efficient manner so that the cost of those services is kept to a minimum. You will be advised of the likely cost to your business before the work is carried out.

What we ask of you

8. Please read this leaflet and the relevant application forms and ask us for guidance if you are not clear what you have to do.