

**Certification scheme fruit plants**  
**General information guide for all crop categories**  
**October 2023**

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# 1. Introduction

The Certification Scheme for Fruit Plants to be referred to as the Fruit Propagation Certification Scheme (FPCS) is a certification scheme operated by APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors who conduct all official inspections and auditing. The administrative work is completed by APHA.

The aim is to provide commercial growers with planting stock descended from stock that is proven in terms of health and vigour.

The scheme covers:

- Soft fruit – strawberries, berry fruit and currants
- Top fruit – apples, pears, cherries and plums
- *Vaccinium spp.*
- Micropropagated material of any of the above crops

This guide describes how the certification scheme works. It should be of interest to those wishing to grow certified material, or wanting to know about the benefits of using certified stock in commercial plantings.

Each category has a separate guide outlining the conditions of entry and standards to be made by applicants. In certain cases, soil sampling for virus vector nematodes is a pre-planting requirement.

## 2. How the scheme works

All material entered into the scheme must be of known lineage and grown under specific conditions with regard to site and isolation from other crops.

During the year the crop will be inspected at least once by a qualified APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector. The frequency and timing of inspections vary according to the category of plants, as are the tolerances for different pests and diseases. The highest grade material is produced under very strict conditions. It is then multiplied through various grades until it is available for use by commercial growers.

## 3. Grades

Crops are entered to produce a specific grade and will normally be certified in that grade if all the conditions of the scheme are met. The main grades are:

- Pre-basic

- Basic
- Certified

## 4. Certification

If the crop meets all the required conditions, the certification details will be published in an annual register produced, at present, APHA. [FPCS.admin@apha.gov.uk](mailto:FPCS.admin@apha.gov.uk)

## 5. Who can enter crops

Any grower in England and Wales who can meet the conditions of entry.

You do not have to enter all the material on your holding for certification, but all material entered must meet all the scheme's requirements in relation to isolation distances, and be clearly identifiable from material that is not entered into the scheme.

## 6. Applications

For application forms contact the approved administrator, presently APHA please request an application form, from [FPCS.admin@apha.gov.uk](mailto:FPCS.admin@apha.gov.uk)

## 7. Fees and charges

The scheme is a statutory scheme covered by a statutory fees instrument. All fees relating to APHA certification visits conducted by the Plant Health & Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI) will be invoiced after each inspection.

## 8. What are the benefits of planting certified plants

We cannot guarantee that every plant certified will be completely free from pests and diseases; no practical, cost effective certification scheme could achieve that. However, plants entered into the Certification Scheme are grown under strict conditions which provide valuable plant health assurances.

- Reduced risk of introducing damaging pests and diseases to your production site

- Certified stocks provide full traceability in order to meet today's stringent marketing requirements.
- Material is descended from parent stock proven in terms of health and vigour.
- The purchase of quality pest and disease free plants offers the opportunity to reduce chemical inputs.
- Plants are impartially inspected and certified by APHA Plant Health specialists.

## 9. Marketing

Growers are asked to take care when marketing stock. Where certified and uncertified material is being supplied from the same holding, potential purchasers must be made aware of the status of what they are buying.

## 10. Plant breeders' rights

As applicant, you are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained all necessary consents to grow varieties that are subject to Plant Breeders' Rights.

## 11. Disclosure

The information you provide will be used for the processing of your application. Some details will be held on the APHA computer system and may be used to compile statistics on activity in your sector and to inform APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors, DEFRA, other Government Departments or their appointed agents of the location of growing crops in emergency situations, such as a pest outbreak. It may also be used by APHA for scientific research.

Requests for disclosure of information will be considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Environmental Information Regulations and the data Protection Act, which in some cases require us to disclose information.

A condition of entry of material into the certification scheme is that the industry group concerned will publish grower details and a register of all stocks certified at the end of the season.

## 12. Liability

It is a condition governing acceptance of applications by APHA and the Welsh Government that no liability shall attach to APHA or the Welsh Government or any of their

officers in connection with any inspection carried out, or in respect of certificates or reports which are based on the result of the examination of material or in any other way in connection with the operation of these arrangements, for inspection and classification, and the act of application for a certificate shall be deemed to imply acceptance by the applicant of this condition.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to APHA.

<http://www.gov.uk/apha>