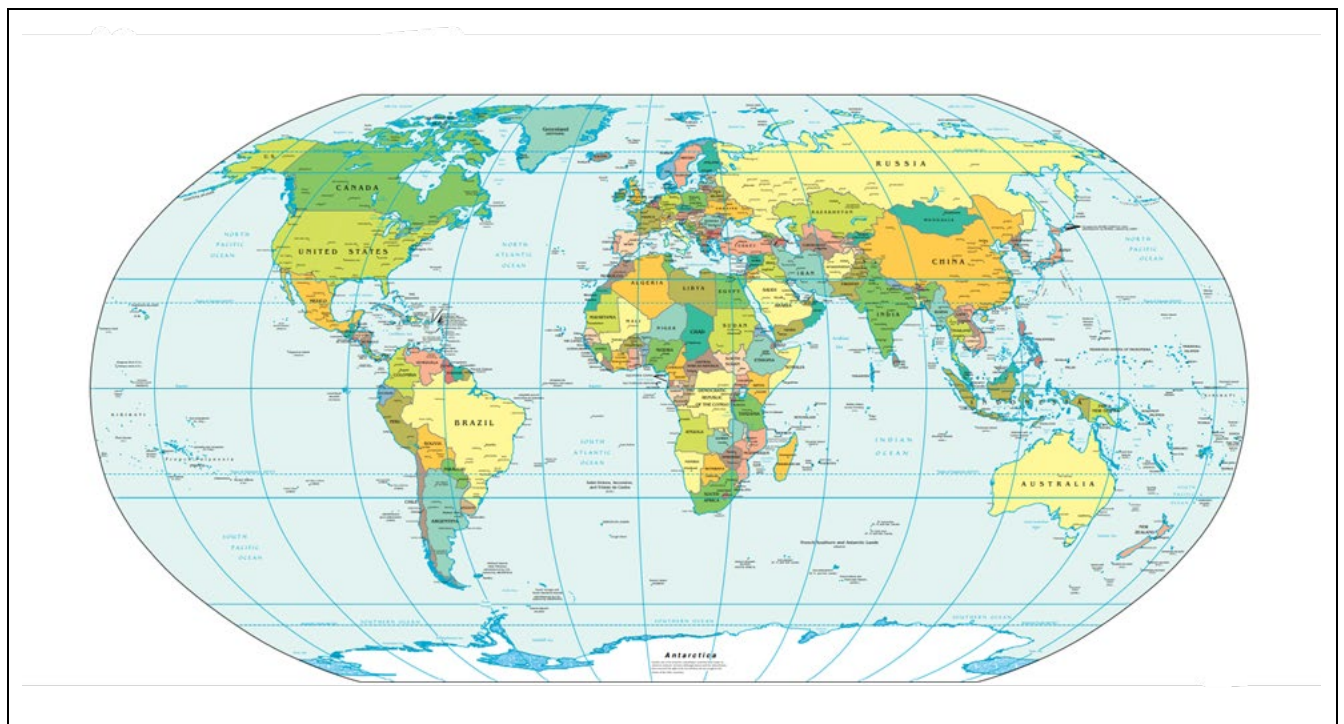




Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Export Program Manual



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When using pesticides, read and follow all label instructions.

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Purpose

The *Export Program Manual (XPM)* is a general reference for inspecting commodities and issuing phytosanitary certificates. Certain aspects of the export program are captured in guidance documents that may require routine updates. These may be procedural (i.e. user fees, held shipments) or commodity specific (i.e., lumber, seed potatoes). These guidance documents are located within the [Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking \(PCIT\)](#) system under the “View Information” tab.

Export Services (ES) is the headquarters unit within the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ), that maintains the Export Certification Program for U.S.- and foreign-origin agricultural commodities.

Export certification is provided as a service to U.S. exporters. Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) issue phytosanitary certificates ([PPQ Form 577](#)) or phytosanitary certificates for reexport ([PPQ Form 579](#)) after verifying the consignment meets all requirements.

NOTICE

PPQ does **not** regulate the exportation of commodities.

The information in the *XPM* is based on international standards, PPQ policy, and procedures for certifying commodities for export. The *XPM* also covers information about tools PPQ uses in support of the Export Program, specifically:

- [PCIT](#) facilitates issuing phytosanitary certificates, including data collection and tracking
- [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#) electronic database provides plant import requirements of foreign countries

Users

Federal, State, and California county ACOs use the *XPM* as a reference for inspecting commodities and issuing phytosanitary certificates.

User experience will vary, but ACOs should have a working knowledge of the following:

- [PCIT](#)
- [PExD](#)
- PPQ *XPM*, guidance documents, and policy

Enabling Legislation

[Plant Protection Act \(PPA\)](#)

The authority for issuing phytosanitary certificates is found in Section 418 of the PPA, Certification for Exports. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for implementing the PPA are [7 CFR Part 353](#) and [7 CFR Part 354](#).

7 CFR Part 353—Export Certification

[7 CFR Part 353](#) provides export certification authorities.

7 CFR 354.3—User Fees for Certain International Services

[7 CFR 354.3](#) provides information on collecting export certification user fees.

Program Standards

PPQ is the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the United States. PPQ is responsible for maintaining a credible export program and meeting the standards of the [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#) and the [North American Plant Protection Organization \(NAPPO\)](#).

IPPC Standards

The IPPC standards consist of [International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures \(ISPMs\)](#).

NAPPO Standards

The NAPPO standards consist of [Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures \(RSPMs\)](#).

Advisories

Advisories are used throughout the *Export Program Manual* to bring important information to your attention. Please carefully review each advisory. The definitions coincide with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) ¹ and are in the format shown below.

⚠ CAUTION

CAUTION is used to indicate tasks involving minor-to-moderate risk of injury.

⚠ DANGER

DANGER is used to indicate the event of imminent risk of death or serious injury.

NOTICE

NOTICE is used to alert a reader of important information or Agency policy.

SAFETY

SAFETY is used for general instructions or reminders related to safety.

⚠ WARNING

WARNING is used to indicate the event of possible risk of serious injury.

Export Program Contacts

Information Services and Manuals Unit (ISMU)

The PPQ Information Services and Manuals Unit (ISMU) issues and maintains manuals electronically on the [APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Manuals](#) webpage.

If you are unable to access the *XPM* online or have a suggested edit (layout, spelling, etc.) please contact ISMU by email at PPQ.IRM.ISMU.Manuals.Feedback@usda.gov.

Revisions to the manual are announced via the [APHIS Stakeholder Registry](#) to anyone who has subscribed to Plant Health Information – Manual Updates – Export Program Manual.

¹ TCIF Guideline, Advisories (Safety-Related Warning Message), TCIF-99-021 Issue 1, p.4.

Export Program

For any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding the Export Program, please follow the contact protocol in the order outlined below, ensuring you gather all relevant information and documentation beforehand.

1. [Export Certification Specialists](#) (ECS) contact information website
2. National Operations Manager (NOM) email: Whitney.Swink@usda.gov
3. Export Services (ES) email: ppqexportservices@usda.gov

State and County Officials

- In California, contact your [county agricultural office](#)
- In all other States, contact your [State agriculture official](#)

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Accreditation

Accreditation is the official approval of government and nongovernment entities to perform specific tasks in support of the Export Program. PPQ facilitates safe and efficient trade by accrediting personnel, organizations, facilities, and processes associated with phytosanitary functions.

Authorized Certification Official (ACO) Accreditation

ACO accreditation is in accordance with [7 CFR Part 353](#) and the [North American Plant Protection Organization \(NAPPO\), Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures \(RSPM\) No. 8](#).

To qualify as an ACO, a combined total of 5 years of education and experience in biological sciences (1 year equals 12 credit hours) is required. Education and experience **do not** have to be consecutive, however, 1 year **must** be job experience. For examples of appropriate courses, refer to Appendix 2 of the [NAPPO RSPM No. 8](#).

EXAMPLE

Examples of acceptable education and experience are:

- 0 years of education and 5 years' experience
- 2 years of education and 3 years' experience
- 4 years of education and 1 year experience

Additional information on ACO accreditation can be found in the guidance documents located within [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

Accreditation and Certification Programs

PPQ can create certification programs with various industries through which PPQ allows specific phytosanitary actions to be conducted by participants based on the degree of processing, standard industry practices, or other criteria. ACOs are responsible for verifying that facilities are approved for the activity they are performing. Refer to PPQ's [Accreditation and Certification](#) website.

The most current information about the approved programs and the functions they are allowed to perform is located within [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

Seed Health Accreditation

PPQ's National Seed Health System (NSHS) provides accreditation to nongovernment entities to perform certain tasks required to support issuing phytosanitary certificates. Each nongovernment entity is audited and evaluated by the NSHS under the direct supervision of the Accreditation Manager for PPQ.

- Growing season inspections of seed-producing fields, nurseries, or greenhouses for disease freedom using methods approved by the NSHS

- Laboratory testing for plant pathogens using methods approved by the NSHS
- Seed sampling using methods approved by the NSHS
- Visual seed inspections using PPQ-approved methods for insects, weed seeds, soil, and other contaminants

NOTICE

It is against PPQ policy to issue certificates for commodities that underwent testing or inspection by a nonaccredited entity or based on results before the entity was accredited.

Certification Eligibility Review—Letter of Ineligibility

Occasionally, applicants request certification for commodities that are **not** eligible for any type of export certification from PPQ. In these cases, the commodity information and foreign country requirements **must** be reviewed by the National Operations Manager (NOM) for Export or Export Services (ES) before PPQ may issue a document to facilitate an export shipment. The information needed for review includes, **but is not limited to**:

- Approximate date of departure or export timeframe
- Contact information
- Description of the commodity and, if processed, a detailed description of the process. The description **must** include the following information for each ingredient: origin, process applied, and botanical name
- Destination country
- How the commodity is packaged
- Intended use
- Official communication from the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the foreign country, if available

Applicants may have to supply ES with a sample of the commodity. All information will be held in strict confidence. Letters of ineligibility can **only** be issued by PPQ personnel.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Records containing privileged or confidential trade information, and commercial or financial information are exempt from mandatory release under FOIA. Refer to [5 U.S.C. 552\(b\)\(4\)](#).

FOIA requests for a completed or partially completed certificate, any supporting documents, or any information in these documents, **must** be forwarded to the [APHIS FOIA Office](#).

Certificates and State records that provide the basis for issued certificates maintained by cooperators are **not** subject to the Federal FOIA. Requests for certificates and State records that provide the basis for an issued completed or partially completed certificate, any supporting documents, or any information in these documents **must not** be released unless appropriate State officials determine the release of the information is required by State law.

Phytosanitary Certificates

There are two types of phytosanitary certificates that can be provided:

- [PPQ Form 577, Phytosanitary Certificate](#)
- [PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport](#)

Phytosanitary certificates are based on the [International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures \(ISPM\) 12](#) and are used to address foreign phytosanitary requirements. Before issuing a phytosanitary certificate, the ACO **must** verify the shipment has been inspected and meets the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country. It is PPQ's policy that **all** shipments certified are practically free (no more than 2% infestation level) of all nonregulated pests.

The issuance date **must always** be the actual date the ACO signs the certificate.

NOTICE

No liability is attached to the USDA or to any of its representatives with respect to phytosanitary certificates.

NOTICE

Personnel shall **not** inspect any commodities for which they or a member of their family is directly or indirectly financially interested.

ACOs may issue [PPQ Form 577](#) for eligible commodities listed in [PExD](#) as unrestricted by the importing country. ACOs may issue [PPQ Form 579](#) for eligible commodities listed as unrestricted by official communication from an importing country.

Electronic Phytosanitary Certificate (ePhyto)

ePhyto provides a reliable, safe, and secure method of transmitting phytosanitary information between NPPOs. Key benefits of ePhyto over traditional paper certificates include reduced administrative burden, decreased costs, improved security, and significant benefits in overall efficiency.

[PCIT](#) generates a paper phytosanitary certificate, and the same data is sent electronically to the NPPO participating in the [International Plant Protection Convention's](#) (IPPC) ePhyto Solution automatically.

Additional Declarations (ADs)

ADs are official government assurances regarding the phytosanitary status of a plant, plant product, or regulated article.

Authority for Entering ADs

ADs **must** be based on activities performed in the United States and supported by documentation such as growing season inspection results, lab testing results, etc. If an AD required in official communication is prohibited by PPQ policy, certification **cannot** be provided.

NOTICE

Do **not** record ADs from foreign phytosanitary certificates on [PPQ Form 579](#).

If an applicant is an Authorized Entity (AE) that can enter its own ADs and treatments, the ACO **must** verify that the information on the phytosanitary certificate is correct before signing.

Additional Official Phytosanitary Information (AOPI)

At the request of exporters, AOPI can be included on a phytosanitary certificate to facilitate future third country reexports. Activities or descriptions conducted in the United States and verified by an ACO may be listed on the phytosanitary certificate. Examples of acceptable AOPI are lab testing, growing season inspections, pest-free areas, attestations that a pest does **not** occur in the United States, or visual inspection. Attest to AOPI **only** after all foreign import requirements of the first country of import have been addressed.

Determining Country of Origin

Origin on the phytosanitary certificate is normally determined by where the commodity is grown and harvested. Seeds retain the origin of the country in which they were harvested regardless of time spent in another country(ies). All other commodities retain the origin of where they were produced or grown. Foreign plants that have been grown in the United States for **at least** one growing season can be considered to have changed their country of origin.

Phytosanitary Certificate Post-Issuance Activities

Post-issuance activities may be required to replace a phytosanitary certificate with a new certificate, split a certificate into multiple certificates, or combine multiple certificates into one certificate. The quantity(ies) on the resulting certificate(s) **cannot** exceed the original inspection(s).

To maintain traceability and ensure functionality of ePhyto, applicants should utilize the appropriate feature within [PCIT](#). For additional information consult the [Quick Reference Guide](#) in the “Help/Contact Us” section of PCIT.

ACOs **must** select the relevant choice from the PCIT AD drop-down menu. Replace and split ADs automatically refer to the certificate number and the issuance date of the certificate being replaced. The AD for a combine should be crafted by the ACO using the template on the general tab of the PCIT home screen. The replacement reason should be noted as only due to one of the following reasons: because of a change in the block number and/or name, lost original phytosanitary certificate, or a delay in conveyance.

NOTICE

Replacements and splits must **only** refer to the certificate they directly replaced, **not** to any prior certificates. All prior replacement ADs, if any, must be removed.

For replacements, ACOs may have to contact the originating office for supporting documents if the documents are **not** attached within [PCIT](#).

Phytosanitary Certificates for Commodities in a Foreign Country

If a shipment has been exported from the United States but has **not** officially entered the commerce of the importing country; replacement phytosanitary certificates may be issued to change the country name.

Prohibited Information on Phytosanitary Certificates

Based on [ISPM 12](#), phytosanitary certificates are **not** commercial documents. Certain commercial information may be referenced on phytosanitary certificates in the “Distinguishing Marks” section **only** if it appears on the shipment packaging:

- Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number
- Grade and/or quality
- Import tariff or reference number
- Letter of commitment number
- Letter of credit number or requirements
- Purchase contract number
- References to trade names, sizes, or other commercial terms
- Tax identification or value-added tax (VAT) number

ACOs **must never** certify phytosanitary certificates containing the following:

- Advice number
- Aflatoxins or other mycotoxins
- Authorization number (**not** same as letter of authorization for European Union (EU))
- Booking number
- Fitness for human consumption
- Freedom from animal diseases and statements about animal health concerns
- Freedom from plant disease-causing organisms for any grain, when the disease occurs in the United States
- Levels of radioactivity, nuclear radiation, or radionuclides associated with a commodity
- Official verification listed in an export summary or official communication
- Pesticides or other chemical residues
- References pertaining to a permit or a permit number issued by the Division of Management Authority (DMA) for protected plant species
- References to genetically modified organism (GMO), genetic composition, and/or disease resistance
- References to wild collected plants
- Requested statements that are **not** of a phytosanitary nature, i.e., economic permits, quantity or quality restrictions, or methods of packaging
- Unofficial requests from applicants and consignees

Export Certification Violations

Unauthorized changes to a phytosanitary certificate are in violation of [7 CFR Part 353](#) and may be prosecuted under the [Plant Protection Act \(PPA\) \(7 U.S.C. 7701\)](#) and other applicable laws. If

a violation is discovered, PPQ will consider the circumstances surrounding the violation and determine the next course of action.

Export Treatments

PPQ does **not** have the authority to require more restrictive phytosanitary measures than the importing country. The importing country's treatment requirements are provided through official communication. Treatments conducted by a licensed pest control operator are acceptable if they provide a treatment certificate and a valid license from the appropriate authority.

NOTICE

All chemical treatments included on phytosanitary certificates **must** follow the pesticide label.

Phytosanitary certificates issued by State and county cooperators can include treatments provided they abide by local policy.

Record details of the treatment in the appropriate section of the phytosanitary certificate.

NOTICE

Do **not** list treatments recorded on foreign phytosanitary certificates in the treatment section of [PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport](#) because these treatments did **not** occur in the United States.

Official Samples for Inspection and Testing

Samples for inspection and testing **must** be drawn by approved Federal, State, or county officials, cooperating agencies, compliant facilities, or accredited entities. Applicants **cannot** provide their own samples.

NOTICE

Sampling should be conducted on the entire shipment before it is containerized. There is **no** method for obtaining representative samples for commodities in retail packaging.

Additions **cannot** be made to the total count or weight of the shipment after sampling.

Pest Freedom

Importing countries may require pest-free area (PFA) or pest-free places of production (PFPP), growing season inspection, or laboratory testing. PPQ is obligated to comply with the phytosanitary requirements established by importing countries, even when scientific evidence would negate these requirements.

All consignments **must** have a visual phytosanitary inspection by an ACO (**except** commodities inspected through [Accreditation and Certification](#) programs, or compliance-based programs).

Growing season inspections (field inspections) are conducted to meet phytosanitary requirements for plants and plant products exported from the United States. PPQ recognizes all State and county plant health agency, university, and [National Seed Health System](#) (NSHS) growing

season inspections for phytosanitary certification purposes. Address any questions pertaining to a growing season inspection report to the issuing State, county, university, or NSHS-accredited entity for clarification.

For phytosanitary certification purposes, laboratory testing **must** be conducted by USDA, State laboratory, university laboratory, or private facility accredited by PPQ. For information on PPQ accredited entities, refer to [APHIS Entities Accredited Under the National Seed Health System](#).

If a country requires a commodity to originate from a PFA or a PFPP, a growing season inspection alone is **not** enough to meet that requirement. The PFA or PFPP statement should be defensible based on the guidance found in the relevant [ISPM 4](#), [ISPM 8](#), and [ISPM 10](#).

NOTICE

Pest freedom can be confirmed through either a growing season inspection during the active growth of mother plants or laboratory testing. However, if a growing season inspection is positive, the commodity is considered positive, and a negative laboratory test **cannot** override this result.

Further information regarding the establishing of pest-free areas or places of production can be found in the guidance documents located within [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

Pest Freedom in Grain Shipments

Laboratory testing and pest-free areas (PFA) or pest-free places of production (PFPP) **cannot** be used as a basis for certification because a methodology for representative sampling and testing for disease causing organisms in grain has **never** been developed.

Exceptions to this policy are the following:

- When the pathogen is not known to occur in the U.S.
- When there is an ongoing national survey for the pathogen (currently only Karnal bunt of wheat – *Tilletia indica*)
- When a special procedure is detailed in a Phytosanitary Export Database (PExD) summary

Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking (PCIT)

[PCIT](#) facilitates issuing phytosanitary certificates for exporting eligible agricultural commodities. PCIT provides improved fraud prevention, reporting functions, quality control, and monitoring capabilities.

The web-based PCIT application is available nationwide and was developed to meet the following objectives:

- Integrate with the IPPC ePhyto solution to securely exchange U.S. phytosanitary certificate data with other participating NPPOs
- Protect PCIT data by incorporating defined security requirements
- Provide data reporting
- Provide data standards to facilitate data integrity for reporting and interfacing with other NPPOs
- Track held shipments and notices of noncompliance

Industry users register their own organizations and submit applications to any duty station. Cooperators should contact their local Export Certification Specialist (ECS) for a personal identification number (PIN).

[PCIT](#) users can generate the following forms:

- Participating [State phytosanitary certificates](#)
- [PPQ Form 572, Application for Inspection and Certification of Domestic Plants and Plant Products for Export](#)
- [PPQ Form 577, Phytosanitary Certificate](#)
- [PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport](#)

[PCIT Quick Reference Guides](#) have been developed for completing various activities within PCIT.

Phytosanitary Export Database (PExD)

The [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#) is the repository of importing country phytosanitary requirements for U.S.-origin commodities. PExD enhances PPQ's ability to maintain the Export Program for U.S. exporters. PExD supports Export Services (ES) with the task of entering export summaries for importing countries. PExD provides reusable text to facilitate uniform and consistent export summaries.

PExD also provides PPQ, State, and county cooperators and industry users easy access to export summaries via direct user queries. PExD interfaces with the [PCIT](#) application processing. During application processing, users are provided with pertinent export summaries based on the importing country, commodity, and other data contained in PExD. This information may be retrieved by users with access to PCIT or for those without access to PCIT, via the PExD link at the bottom of the PCIT home page.

Recordkeeping

Phytosanitary certificates and attached documents are automatically archived in [PCIT](#) for 5 years. If you do **not** use the attachment feature in PCIT, you **must** maintain the supporting documents for 3 years (or 5 years in the event of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) commodities). Any documents associated with user fees **must** be retained for 3 years.

Return of Foreign-Origin Commodities to the Country of Origin

Foreign-origin commodities that have entered U.S. commerce, been safeguarded, or remain sealed in original packaging, which are being returned to the country of origin, can be certified without official communication from the country of origin. Exporters should verify if there are additional phytosanitary requirements from the country of origin prior to exportation.

Time Limits

The NPPO of the importing country may impose specific requirements on when phytosanitary certificates may be issued based on inspection or exportation. Per PPQ requirement, a phytosanitary certificate **must** be issued within 30 days of the phytosanitary inspection. Replacing phytosanitary certificates is acceptable outside of any time limit restriction unless specifically prohibited by the importing country.

NOTICE

If a shipment leaves the country within the PPQ 30-day time limit, a phytosanitary certificate may still be issued upon request, unless the importing country time limit is more restrictive. Documentation such as bills of lading or airway bills **must** be provided to the ECS for verification.

To avoid possible issues upon arrival, exporters should request certificates before the shipment leaves the country. Once the product leaves the United States, phytosanitary actions such as reinspection and treatment are **no** longer available. If an importing country's time limit is more restrictive than PPQ's policy, the importing country's time limit requirement will take precedence and **must** be met.

It is important to understand the difference between both date types:

- Inspection date(s): date of approved phytosanitary inspection(s)

NOTICE

When a shipment has multiple inspections, the 30-day time limit begins on the earliest date.

- Issuance date: date the phytosanitary certificate is approved/signed

While the issuance and inspection dates can be the same, they are two different actions.

NOTICE

If the entire shipment is reinspected, the time limit resets and starts on the earliest date of the reinspection.

Time Limits for Growing Season Inspections and Laboratory Testing

If a country requires a laboratory test or growing season inspection and specifies a time limit, the test or inspection **must** be conducted within the specified time limit. If **no** laboratory test or growing season inspection time limit is specified, the testing/inspection will **not** expire provided the commodity has been safeguarded after harvest.

Transit

ACOs may need to record a transiting country if it has specific requirements based on PExD or official communication from the NPPO. These can **only** be added on the certificate adjustment page by ACOs or AEs.

User Fees

PPQ has the authority to collect user fees through [7 CFR 354.3](#). State or county cooperators establish their own fees for phytosanitary certificates.

General Procedures

The Process of Export Certification

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Introduction

This chapter details the procedures for certifying commodities offered for export and collecting user fees.

Steps for Certifying a Commodity

Step 1: Applicant Information for Certification

Applicants **must** provide information related to the commodity and destination. This information allows Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) to determine the entry requirements and appropriate inspection procedure.

Applications are submitted within [Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking System \(PCIT\)](#) (refer to [Creating an Application](#)).

NOTICE

ACOs are responsible for holding in strict confidence any information provided by industry.

Step 2: Eligibility for Certification

To determine eligibility for a phytosanitary certificate, ACOs review the application based on the commodity, its origin and destination, and its protected status. Refer to the three tables below for assistance in determining eligibility for certification based on commodity, origin and destination, or protected status.

Table 3-1 Determine Eligibility for Certification Based on Commodity

If the commodities are:	And they are:	And they are:	Then:
Plants, parts of plants, or derived from plants (including edible mushrooms)	Processed products	Covered by an approved program or compliance agreement	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 or 579 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Origin and Destination
		Not covered by the above	REFER to Export Program in Chapter 1
	Unprocessed products	→	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 or 579 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Origin and Destination
Used agricultural machinery	→	→	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 or 579 2. REFER to Used Agricultural Machinery Guidance document in PCIT
Mushroom spawn	→	→	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 only 2. REFER to Mushroom Spawn Guidance document in PCIT
Mixture or combination of plant and nonplant materials	→	→	REFER to Export Program Contacts in Chapter 1

NOTICE

The ineligible commodity table in the [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#) contains an abbreviated list of commodities that have been requested for phytosanitary certification but have been deemed ineligible due to being nonplant products, their degree or extent of processing, or are covered by another agency.

Eligibility Based on Origin and Destination

Table 3-2 Determine Eligibility for Certification Based on Origin and Destination

If the commodities are from:	And are being exported:	Then:
The United States or affiliated islands (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands)	To a foreign country	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Protected Status
	Interstate via Canada	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Protected Status
	To the U.S. or affiliated islands	1. CONSIDER ineligible for a certificate 2. REFER applicant to the State or affiliated island's plant regulatory agency for certification using a State phytosanitary certificate 3. EXIT this manual
A foreign country (only foreign-origin commodities that have entered U.S. commerce are eligible for certification. Commodities transiting the United States are ineligible).	To a foreign country	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 or 579 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Protected Status
	Interstate via Canada	1. CONSIDER eligible for PPQ Form 577 or 579 2. REFER to Eligibility Based on Protected Status
	To the U.S. or affiliated islands	1. CONSIDER ineligible for a certificate 2. REFER applicant to the State, country, or affiliated island's plant regulatory agency for certification using a State phytosanitary certificate 3. EXIT this manual

Eligibility Based on Protected Status

Commodities may be protected by either the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) or the [Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#). To determine if a commodity is protected, visit the CITES website or the [Environmental Conservation Online System \(ECOS\)](#) website.

Table 3-3 Determine Eligibility for Certification Based on CITES and ESA Status

If the commodities are:	And you are:	Then:
Neither protected by CITES nor ESA	→	REFER to Step 3: Determining Import Requirements
Protected by CITES or ESA	Located at a CITES or ESA port	
	Not located at a CITES or ESA port	1. CONTACT the nearest CITES port or PPQ regional botanist or Export Certification Specialist (ECS) for guidance on moving the shipment to a designated port (at the owner's expense). Some CITES ports have established procedures for ACOs at interstate locations and non-CITES ports to assist in inspecting and processing shipments of protected plants¹ 2. EXIT this manual

Step 3: Determining Import Requirements

ACOs determine the importing country's phytosanitary requirements, which may be listed in the [PExD](#) or, if provided, through official communication from the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO).

NOTICE

ACOs **must** refuse to issue a phytosanitary certificate if the commodity does **not** meet the import requirements or when the foreign import requirements violate PPQ policy (disease freedom statements for grain, quality related statements, fiduciary information, etc.)

For reexports, if the importing country will **not** provide an import permit or other official communication, but has published import requirements, the applicant **must** provide a highlighted copy of those requirements pertaining to the commodity being certified.

NOTICE

For reexports, if the importing country requirements are available and you **cannot** verify the requirements have been met in the country of origin, then any required phytosanitary conditions of the importing country **must** take place in the United States according to PPQ Policy.

¹ Some CITES ports have established procedures allowing State or county cooperators to attest that the plants are artificially propagated and to complete a State phytosanitary certificate. The applicant sends the State phytosanitary certificate, the invoice, and specified copies of the CITES or ESA documents to the designated CITES port for validation and endorsement. At some CITES ports, a blank phytosanitary certificate **must** be obtained and partially completed by the applicant and sent back to the CITES port, along with the other paperwork. Procedures have been established to allow PPQ Plant Health Safeguarding Specialists (PHSSs) at non-CITES ports to confirm the applicant has PPQ Form 622, USDA General Permit, and proper CITES or ESA documents. The PHSS confirms all the paperwork matches and the applicant completes [PPQ Form 572, Application for Inspection and Certification of Domestic Plants and Plant Products for Export](#) and sends it along with specified copies of the invoice and CITES or ESA documents to the designated CITES port for validation and endorsement. If there's a concern about the shipment's validity, the shipment may be required to go through a CITES port.

Official Communication

Official communication, including an English translation, contains the phytosanitary requirements from an NPPO that **must** be met to import a commodity. Applicants are responsible for translation accuracy. Since there are **no** international standards for official communication, ACOs need to carefully review any document to ensure it is from the NPPO of the importing country. The name and contact information for an NPPO can be found in [PExD](#) under “Foreign Points of Contact” in the country’s summary.

NOTICE

[PExD](#) should always be consulted even if official communication is presented. Official communication from an importing country’s NPPO supersedes information found in PExD unless specifically stated otherwise in the country summary.

NOTICE

Once official communication has been presented, the ACO **must** meet the requirements presented. If the requirements on official communication are **not** allowed by PPQ policy, refuse to certify and recommend obtaining new official communication.

Phytosanitary Export Database (PExD)

[PExD](#) contains the importing country’s phytosanitary requirements for U.S. commodities. PExD includes general information by country and specific requirements ordered by botanical name and plant part. ACOs should review all sections of PExD before certification. Refer to the guidance documents located within the PCIT system under the “View Information” tab.

Step 4: Satisfying Import Requirements

This section assists ACOs in verifying that foreign import requirements have been met. For procedures to inspect specific commodities covered under a workplan or other protocol, refer to the export summary in [PExD](#).

Examine Acceptable Documentation

Specific inspection documents provided by other government agencies, compliant facilities, or accredited entities may be used for phytosanitary certification. Refer to

[Table 3-4](#) to determine if additional inspection is necessary.

Table 3-4 Documentation Presented

If the documentation is:	And:	And:	Then:
Acceptable (per Table 3-5)	All phytosanitary requirements have been met	No inspection is necessary	REFER to Verify Treatments
	Not all phytosanitary requirements have been met	Inspection is necessary	REFER to Determine the Sample Size
Unacceptable	→		

Table 3-5 Acceptable Inspection Certificates and Documents

Issuing agency/organization:	Form number:	Form title and notes:
Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)	SC-146E	Certificate of Quality and Condition (Processed Foods)
	SC-147CS	Certificate of Quality and Condition (Processed Foods) Quality Assurance
	SC-149CS	Certificate of Quality and Condition (Processed Foods) Continuous Inspection
	SC-294	Report on Sanitary Inspection (issued for apples, pears, emperor grapes, and some vegetables)
	SC-489e	Memorandum Report of Inspection for Processed Raisins
Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS)	FGIS 921-2	Inspection Report—Insects in Grain
Florida	FV 185-C	Florida Export Citrus Fruit Inspection Report
Various States	Various	Any State phytosanitary certificate
Various States/counties	State/county inspection report	Any State/county inspection report
Foreign NPPOs	Various	Phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for reexport
Accredited entities	Various	Various forms
Compliant facilities	PPQ-572	Application for Inspection and Certification for Domestic Plants and Plant Products for Export

Selected examples of can be found within the guidance documents located in [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

NOTICE

Verify any document **not** listed in [Table 3-5](#) above through the contact protocol [Export Program Contacts](#) in Chapter 1.

Determine the Sample Size

Sampling must **not** begin until the applicant has presented the entire shipment, clearly marked and labeled. Samples used for certification **must** be large enough and accurately represent the entire shipment. For policy about who may draw official samples, refer to [Official Samples for Inspection and Testing](#) in Chapter 2.

Sampling levels depend on the size of the shipment, plant part, intended use, and potentially importing country requirements.

Commodities shipped in bulk (e.g., grain or potatoes) will require sampling techniques appropriate to the levels of pest risk and industry standards. Many commodities may require higher levels of inspection. The inspection level for nursery stock should be as close to 100% as practical. Special procedures for sampling and inspecting seeds have been developed. Refer to guidance documents located within [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

2% Sampling Rate

The **minimum** sampling rate for all other commodities is 2% of the shipment’s inspectional unit (i.e., boxes, units, bags, tray packs, etc.).

EXAMPLE A shipment of 400 boxes of fruit would require 100% inspection of 8 boxes ($.02 \times 400$ boxes = 8 boxes). 2% is a **minimal** level.

Hypergeometric Table

It is often impractical to inspect 2% of the shipment. Determine the number of units by using the hypergeometric table illustrated in [Table 3-6](#). Each of these units should be inspected completely.

Table 3-6 Hypergeometric Table for Random Sampling

Total number of units:	Randomly select this number of units to inspect:
1 – 13	Inspect all units
14 – 15	13
16 – 17	14
18 – 19	15
20 – 22	16
23 – 25	17
26 – 28	18
29 – 32	19

33 – 38	20
39 – 44	21
45 – 53	22
54 – 65	23
66 – 82	24
83 – 108	25
109 – 157	26
158 – 271	27
272 – 885	28
886 – 200,000	29

Inspect the Commodity

ACOs **must** visually inspect all shipments for harmful organisms (weed seeds, insects, signs and symptoms of disease, soil, etc.). In addition to a visual inspection, the importing country may specify that pest freedom be determined by a laboratory test, growing season inspection, area freedom, and/or production area freedom. Refer to [Table 3-7](#) to take appropriate action.

The preferred method of certifying a commodity for export is to inspect the commodity before it is containerized.

ACOs **must** caution applicants that shipments **cannot** be certified until all inspection results have been finalized. The applicant is responsible for maintaining the identity and integrity of the shipment and for safeguarding the commodity after inspection from infestation or infection from harmful organisms.

Table 3-7 Determine Pest Freedom

If the country requires:	And the supporting documents show the commodity:	Then:
Area freedom (pest-free area)	Originates from a known pest-free area (PFA)	CONTINUE to Table 3-8
	Does not originate from a known PFA	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
Production area freedom (pest-free place of production)	Originates from a known pest-free place of production (PFPP)	CONTINUE to Table 3-8
	Does not originate from a known PFPP	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
Growing season inspection	Was satisfactorily inspected	CONTINUE to Table 3-8
Growing season inspection (cont.)	Was not satisfactorily inspected	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual

Laboratory test	Was laboratory tested	CONTINUE to Table 3-8
	Was not laboratory tested	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual

After reviewing supporting documents and completing the visual inspection, continue to [Table 3-8](#).

Table 3-8 Action to Take When a Commodity MUST be FREE from Pests

If you determine that the commodity:	And the pest or disease:	And the commodity is:	And a treatment is:	Then:
Is free of pests, soil, plant debris, etc.	→	→	→	REFER to Verify Treatments
Has pests ^{2, 3}	Does not have phytosanitary significance to the importing country	Practically free of pests ⁴	→	REFER to Verify Treatments
		Not practically free of pests	Unavailable or the applicant refuses to treat ⁵	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
	Has phytosanitary significance to the importing country	→	Available ⁵	REFER to Verify Treatments
			Unavailable ⁵	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
Has soil or plant debris	→	→	A method of reconditioning the commodity is available (cleaning, treating, etc.)	1. OFFER the applicant the option to recondition the commodity 2. REINSPECT the sample
			No method of reconditioning is available	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual

² Any pest **must** be identified by the nearest PPQ or State identifier **unless** you have identification release authority.

³ If you detect multiple pests, evaluate each pest using this table. Follow the **most** restrictive action in the "Then" column.

⁴ For export certification purposes, practically free is to **not exceed** a 2% infestation level **unless** otherwise stated by the importing country.

⁵ If the applicant elects to recondition the commodity, REFER to [Determine the Sample Size](#).

Verify Treatments

Any commodity for export requiring treatment, either because of the importing country's requirement, pest detection, or at the request of the exporter, **must** be treated according to the label instructions.

NOTICE

Treatments do **not** preclude or substitute for a phytosanitary inspection. If there was **no** opportunity to inspect prior to treatment, an inspection still needs to be conducted after the treatment. The treatment may **not** have been efficacious against all regulated pests.

⚠ WARNING

Do **not** certify any commodity that has exceeded the label requirements set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). All treatments **must** strictly conform to **all** label requirements.

NOTICE

Treatments conducted by FGIS are acceptable to include on a phytosanitary certificate if the treatment is indicated on FGIS Form 921-2. Refer to [Examine Acceptable Documentation](#).

Treatments should be included in the treatment section of the phytosanitary certificate. Refer to [Table 3-9](#).

Table 3-9 Action to Take When Commodity May Require Treatment

If the commodity:	And:	And the applicant:	Then:
Required treatment	→	Is willing to arrange for treatment	1. VERIFY treatment 2. RECORD details on PPQ Form 577 or PPQ Form 579 3. REFER to Record Inspection Results
		Is not willing to arrange for treatment	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
Does not require treatment	→	→	REFER to Record Inspection Results
Does not require treatment, but was treated	The treatment was performed according to the label	Wants the treatment on the certificate	1. RECORD details on PPQ Form 577 or PPQ Form 579 2. REFER to Record Inspection Results
		Does not want the treatment on the certificate	REFER to Record Inspection Results

Verify Miscellaneous Requirements

There may be additional requirements, including, but **not** limited to:

1. [Time Restrictions](#)
2. [Packaging Requirements](#)
3. [Specified Ports](#)

Time Restrictions

ACOs **must** advise the exporter about a country's restrictions on when a commodity may be imported.

Table 3-10 Action to Take When Commodities May Enter Only During Specific Time Periods

If the export summary or import permit (IP):	And you determine the specified time period:	Then:
Lists a specific time period when the commodities are admissible	Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
	Can be met	REFER to Time Limits in Chapter 2
Does not list a specific time period	→	

Packaging Requirements

Packaging or other material that may be associated with the shipment such as wood packaging material ([ISPM 15](#)), bagging, containers, etc., **must** meet the importing country's requirements. Advise the applicant of any packaging requirements but **do not** refuse to certify.

Specified Ports

Importing countries may require shipments to enter specific ports. Advise the applicant that the shipment may be refused or delayed if entering a port **other than** specified in the importing country's requirements.

Decide Which Phytosanitary Certificate to Issue

Refer to [Table 3-11](#) to determine the action to take.

Table 3-11 Deciding When to Issue PPQ Form 577 or PPQ Form 579

If the origin is:	And a foreign PC is:	And the requirements are:	And the requirements:	Then:
Domestic	→	→	Can be met	ISSUE PPQ Form 577
			Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 1. EXIT this manual
Foreign	Present	Known	Can be met by the foreign PC and/or activities conducted in the United States	ISSUE PPQ Form 579

If the origin is:	And a foreign PC is:	And the requirements are:	And the requirements:	Then:
Foreign (cont.)	Present (cont.)	Known (cont.)	Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
		Unknown	→	
	Absent	Known	Can be met by activities conducted in the United States	ISSUE PPQ Form 577
			Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
		Unknown	→	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
Domestic and foreign (blended)	Present	Known	Can be met by the foreign PC and/or activities conducted in the United States	ISSUE PPQ Form 577
			Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
		Unknown	→	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
	Absent	Known	Can be met by activities conducted in the United States	ISSUE PPQ Form 577
			Cannot be met	1. REFUSE to certify 2. EXIT this manual
		Unknown	→	

Step 5: Complete Phytosanitary Certificate

ACOs process the application for the phytosanitary certificate (refer to [Processing PCIT Applications](#)).

Completing PPQ Forms 577 and 579

This section contains information and instructions for completing the following certificates

- [PPQ Form 577, Phytosanitary Certificate](#)
- [PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport](#)

NOTICE

Hold all information in strict confidence to protect buyers and applicants. Disclosing confidential information may reveal trade secrets or may cause financial harm to buyers and applicants.

Guidelines for Completing PPQ Form 577 and PPQ Form 579

- Abbreviations of imperial or metric units of measure are allowed in the treatment block
- Attest **only** to the phytosanitary condition of plants or plant products
- Enter the actual dates of inspection
- **Never** abbreviate city names or any other entry unless it is part of a business name (e.g., A.B.C. Distributing Inc. LLC)
- **Never** enter a grade, intended use, a commercial term, or a trade name
- **Never** enter a variety or subspecies unless it is required in the [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#) or official communication and **all** conditions can be met
- **Never** enter dates of a field or growing season inspection or laboratory tests
- **Never** enter phone numbers, fax numbers, or email addresses
- **Never** enter statements such as “In-care-of,” (c/o), “Attention to,” “Agent for,” or “Notify”
- **Never** enter titles to signatures or names
- **Never** pre- or post-date a phytosanitary certificate
- PCIT will automatically populate certain fields based on the information submitted in the application
- Prepare all phytosanitary certificates in English
- Spell out dates in the month/day/year format (e.g., July 17, 2023)

Record Inspection Results

Users **must** enter inspection results on the Inspection Details screen in PCIT. The “Inspector’s Name” field should reflect who conducted the inspection. When inspections are **not** conducted by Federal, State, or county officials, it is important to select the appropriate entity from the drop-down menu (Accredited Entity, FGIS, or HQSG Facility).

Inspection Details

Enter all inspection information for the application below.

If the inspection spans multiple days, even if they are not consecutive days, enter the first inspection day in the Start Date and the last inspection day in the End Date.

Items marked * are required.

*Inspector Name: Select

*Inspection Percent: 2

*Inspection Start Date: mm/dd/yyyy

Inspection End Date: mm/dd/yyyy

Inspection Finding: Select Add

Figure 3-1 Example of Inspection Details Page

Processing PCIT Applications

Refer to the [PCIT Quick Reference Guides](#) to process an application in PCIT.

Step 6: Collect User Fees

Phytosanitary certification is funded directly by user fees according to [7 CFR Part 354](#). PCIT is used to collect user fees for phytosanitary certificates. This section provides guidance for Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) and applicants.

The following facts apply to PCIT:

- Fees are **not** charged until certificates are issued or in printed status.
- Phytosanitary certificates **cannot** be completed without sufficient funds.
- Debit transaction reports may be run to view all credits and debits by applicant.
- Applicants can deposit funds for future transactions in PCIT at any time.
- User fees (including the PPQ administrative \$6 fee) are **not** charged for phytosanitary certificates replaced due to ACO error.

Guidance for Federal ACOs

PPQ charges user fees based on the shipment value.

Determine Shipment Value

Phytosanitary certificate fees are based on whether the shipment is commercial or noncommercial.

- Commercial shipments: shipments with a value **greater than or equal to** \$1250 are considered commercial.
- Noncommercial shipments: shipments with values **less than** \$1250 are considered noncommercial. Applicants **must** provide an invoice indicating the value is **less than** \$1250. Quantities and description of the commodity **must** match those found on the invoice.

NOTICE

Nonprofit shipments are considered noncommercial regardless of value. Applicants **must** provide documentation indicating the shipment is a humanitarian shipment.

- Interagency agreements: shipments may be certified for other USDA agencies under an interagency agreement and are charged the noncommercial rate.

Determine User Fee for Phytosanitary Certificates

Table 3-12 User Fees for Phytosanitary Certificates

Shipment type:	Cost of certificate:
Commercial (value of \$1250 or more)	\$106
Noncommercial (value of less than \$1250)	\$61

Replacing Phytosanitary Certificates

Phytosanitary certificates may be replaced upon the applicant's request. Each original certificate is entitled to a **single** \$15 replacement.

NOTICE

Replacement also refers to certificates that are split, combined, or replaced more than once.

Table 3-13 User Fees for Post-Issuance Activities

Type of certificate replacement:	Cost:
Reduced rate for first replacement	\$15
All subsequent commercial replacements	\$106
All subsequent noncommercial replacements	\$61

Collect User Fee

Applicants can prefund their accounts using a credit card or ACH transaction. Phytosanitary certificates **must** be paid for at the time of service in PCIT. For additional information consult the [Quick Reference Guide](#) in the “Help/Contact Us” section of PCIT.

NOTICE

Phytosanitary certificates issued by PPQ on overtime are subject to both the overtime fees and the associated certificate fee. Overtime fees are **not** collected through PCIT. Handle overtime fees according to APHIS policy.

Collecting the User Fee for Nonanimal Letterhead in PCIT

PPQ is also responsible for issuing nonanimal letterhead statements even though the document is not generated in PCIT. For guidance on collecting user fees for nonanimal letterhead, refer to the guidance document located within PCIT under the “View Information” tab.

State and County Guidance for Collecting User Fees in PCIT

The PPQ administrative fee (\$6) applies to all phytosanitary certificates (including replacements) issued by State and county ACOs. In PCIT, PPQ can collect the administrative fee directly from the applicant at the time of service. In addition, PPQ can also collect the State and county fees. For information on how to establish fee collection for States or counties, refer to the guidance document located within PCIT under the “View Information” tab.

Handling Refunds

Applicants may request a refund of any portion of their PCIT account balance from Export Services (ES). Applicants may email the PCIT Refund Request Worksheet to ppqexportservices@usda.gov.

NOTICE

Once a phytosanitary certificate has been issued, the user fee is **not** refundable.

Special Procedures

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Lumber

Special procedures cover lumber inspection and treatment certification. These special procedures supplement the general inspection guidelines detailed under [Step 4: Satisfying Import Requirements](#) and can be found in the guidance documents located within [PCIT](#) under the “View Information” tab.

Most lumber inspections should be performed either under compliance with PPQ or under the auspices of an agreement with a lumber grading/inspection agency.

Inspection of Containerized Lumber

Containerized lumber presented to PPQ for phytosanitary certification requires a thorough inspection if it was **not** previously inspected by another approved entity.

Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) inspecting containerized lumber should concentrate on examining the exposed edges and butt ends of the lumber for:

- Absence of bark based on official communication from the importing country
- Absence of rounded edges based on official communication from the importing country
- KD, HT, and/or KD-HT markings, if required, by the importing country
- Moisture content reading meets official communication from the importing country
- Presence of frass

Densely Packed Cotton Bales Inspected Under Compliance

Due to the nature of processing cotton (minimum compression rate of 22 pounds of lint per cubic foot (352.4 kg of lint per cubic meter)) and the lessened pest risk associated with its processing method, PPQ developed the National Cotton Compliance Agreement Program allowing a more efficient process for issuing most cotton phytosanitary certificates. Cotton warehouses that enter into the agreement can self-inspect cotton under compliance **without** requiring an ACO's visual inspection of each consignment. For additional information, ACOs should review the guidance document located in [PCIT](#) under the "View Information" tab.

Grain (Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS))

The purpose of this section is to provide clarification on certain aspects of inspections conducted by USDA's [Federal Grain Inspection Service \(FGIS\)](#). FGIS is a program area within the [Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](#).

To eliminate duplicative inspections, PPQ accepts official sampling and inspections conducted by FGIS under the [U.S. Grain Standards Act and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946](#). Phytosanitary certificates can be issued based on FGIS inspection results, which are reported on FGIS Form 921-2, Inspection Report—Insects in Grain.

NOTICE

FGIS Form 921-2 **must** be presented to the certifying office before issuing PPQ Form 577 or PPQ Form 579. The **only** exception to this policy is when an ACO performs the official inspection.

For additional information, ACOs should review the guidance document located in [PCIT](#) under the "View Information" tab.

Additional Compliance Agreement Programs

PPQ has identified certain commodities with a decreased pest risk based on the level of processing. Generally, highly processed plant products do **not** require phytosanitary certification. However, PPQ offers the option for a phytosanitary certificate as a service to U.S. exporters. In some cases, importing countries may require a phytosanitary certificate despite a commodity's high degree of processing. To facilitate these exports, PPQ has developed compliance agreements that allow participants to meet certain requirements in lieu of inspection by PPQ or its designee.

Processed Plant Products Under Compliance

ACOs assisting applicants in pursuing a *Processed Plant Products Compliance Agreement* should review the guidance document located in [PCIT](#) under the "View Information" tab.

Responsibilities

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Applicants

1. Present **all** original official communication from the foreign country and the English translation. Applicants are responsible for the accuracy of all translations.
2. Submit a request for phytosanitary certification with the [Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking \(PCIT\)](#) system. Applications **must** be submitted in a timely manner.
3. Provide **all** necessary documentation, which may include import permits (IP), bills of lading, manifests, shipping invoices, foreign phytosanitary certificates, and inspection certificates.
4. Provide third-country import requirements for reexport certification with the pertinent commodity regulation highlighted.
5. Present the shipment for inspection.
6. Provide labor to open and close packages and adequate facilities to perform the inspection. Before certification, the facilities **must** include supplies, equipment, and proper lighting for an efficient inspection.
7. Provide for any required treatments, laboratory testing, sampling, reconditioning, or other actions necessary to meet the requirements of the importing country.
8. Safeguard the certified shipment from infestation between the date of inspection and the actual date of export, and ensure the certified shipment departs within the time limits specified by the importing country.

Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs)

1. Determine foreign import requirements using the [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#) or official communication.
2. Verify the contents of the shipment match the application in [PCIT](#) and review any other supporting documents.
3. Advise applicants regarding a country's specified time limits. Refer to the *Definitions* in a country's summary for time limits.
4. Advise applicants on the status of a pending shipment or when there will be delays in certifying a shipment.
5. Inspect the commodity to determine that it meets the importing country's requirements.
6. Refuse to issue phytosanitary certificates for prohibited commodities or commodities that **do not** meet a country's import requirements.
7. Prepare certificates in English.
8. Ensure **all** supporting documents are attached in [PCIT](#) or filed per recordkeeping policy.
9. Ensure certificate processing is complete, and certificate is in "Issued" or "Printed" status.

Export Certification Specialists (ECSs)

1. Ensure the credibility and integrity of PPQ's Export Program by providing training and quality control functions.
2. Serve as the point of contact among county, State, and Federal officials regarding phytosanitary certification.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in using and training in [Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking \(PCIT\)](#).
4. Be proficient using this manual and the [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#). Notify Export Services (ES) of needed changes and updates.
5. Complete a monthly review of 75 certificates within their area for compliance with policy and foreign import requirements.
6. Investigate certificates associated with a notice of noncompliance.
7. Review and nominate candidates in conformance with Federal regulations (refer to the similarly named guidance document located in PCIT under the "View Information" tab).
8. Maintain accreditation records for **all** ACOs in [PCIT](#).
9. Inactivate PCIT users who transfer, retire, or otherwise separate from Federal, State, or county employment.
10. Conduct facility audits to ensure compliance with Federal regulations, policies, procedures, bilateral agreements, protocols, workplans, and international standards.
11. Establish and maintain facility compliance agreements in their area of responsibility. Ensure facility information in [PCIT](#) is up to date.
12. Provide input to ES during the development of new certification policies and procedures or modification of existing ones.

Trade Specialists

1. Work with visiting foreign officials to address market access.
2. Serve as a resource to USDA-APHIS-Phytosanitary Issues Management (PIM), ACOs, ECSs, and other stakeholders.
3. Implement agreed-upon requirements within their area of coverage.
4. Investigate problems in the field related to market access.
5. Conduct facility audits to ensure compliance with Federal regulations, policies, procedures, bilateral agreements, protocols, workplans, and international standards.
6. Assist PIM to facilitate meetings between industry and foreign officials to ensure workplan requirements are met and resolve disagreements or procedural problems.
7. Coordinate and arrange site visits to monitor compliance with existing programs.

National Operations Managers (NOMs) (Export Certification and Trade)

1. Support and facilitate trade while considering program, stakeholder, economic, and political interests by following export guidelines for agricultural commodities.
2. Provide guidance and direction for PPQ policy, regulations, procedures, etc. to customers and stakeholders. Act as a resource and consultant to field staff regarding technical and operational issues.
3. Monitor program activities and the effective use of resources.
4. Interact with ECSs through regional workshops, conference calls, and other support as needed.
5. Assist ES and PIM staff with trade issues by facilitating development and implementation of export activities.
6. Gather information from the field for new and continuing export markets.
7. Provide advice, information, and support in developing guidelines for program objectives.
8. Identify problem areas and recommend corrective measures.
9. Contribute to effective management and control systems for program activities.
10. Prepare reports and recommendations for program issues.
11. Remain abreast of program changes and emerging issues.
12. Facilitate processing and information gathering for notices of noncompliance.
13. Provide input on budget, staffing, and personnel assignments within the Export Program.
14. Support, promote, communicate, and carry out PPQ departmental and administrative policy.
15. Investigate noncompliant phytosanitary certificates. Verify documents, confirm adherence to certification policy and procedures, and assure conformance with the importing country's requirements. Aid agricultural applicants and ACOs in negotiating the release of detained shipments.

Export Services (ES)

1. Establish export certification policy and procedures.
2. Maintain current information on the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries.
3. Analyze, interpret, and prepare export summaries of the phytosanitary requirements for ACOs and other interested parties.
4. Oversee quality assurance practices to improve overall data quality, integrity, and credibility.
5. When possible, assist U.S. applicants with held shipments.
6. Ensure **only** authorized inspectors and ACOs inspect and certify the phytosanitary conditions of commodities offered for export.
7. Lead development and maintenance of [PCIT](#) and oversee the United States's role in and deployment of electronic documentation.
8. Provide data to stakeholders.
9. Standardize the certification process to prevent errors and improve the usability of [PCIT](#).
10. Enhance efficiency through the targeted use of technical advancements to update system best practices.

Introduction

Use this *Glossary* to find the meaning of specialized words, abbreviations, acronyms, and terms used in export certification and used by the PPQ Export Program. Terms that are generally used by National Plant Protection Organizations, defined by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), are published in [ISPM No. 5](#).

Also refer to the complete glossary of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) published in [RSPM No. 5](#).

Definitions, Terms, and Abbreviations

additional official phytosanitary information (AOPI). official information that can be included in the additional declaration (AD) block of a phytosanitary certificate for facilitating future reexports of plants or plant products. Exporters **must** request this information be attested to on a phytosanitary certificate and the request **must** be supported by lab results, growing season inspections, etc.

affiliated island. island associated with the United States but **not** fully integrated as a State (i.e., American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Puerto Rico (PR), and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI)). Affiliated islands are insular areas monitored by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). Federal agency responsible for inspecting, grading, classing, standardizing, regulating, sampling, testing, and reporting market news for specific agricultural and food commodities; refer to [Table 3-5 Acceptable Inspection Certificates and Documents](#) for a list of acceptable inspection certificates.

artificially propagated. plants grown by humans from seeds cuttings, callus tissue, spores, or other propagules under controlled conditions.

Authorized Certification Official (ACO). public officer authorized by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and accredited for signing phytosanitary certificates, who 1) possesses the required education, experience, and training; and 2) has written confirmation of having successfully passed an approved examination ([RSPM No. 8](#)).

Authorized Entity (AE). applicant authorized by a Federal, State, or county duty station to complete the information on [PPQ Form 577](#) or [PPQ Form 579](#), including the additional declaration (AD) and treatment blocks.

blended commodities. commodities that have been mixed together from different sources.

bran. pericarp of grain.

certified true copy. endorsement of an official document (e.g., phytosanitary certificate) by an Authorized Certification Official (ACO) accurately describing a commodity that entered U.S. commerce from a foreign country.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). multinational treaty regulating the export and reexport of listed species of wild fauna and flora.

cooperator. State or County plant regulatory official authorized by PPQ to perform phytosanitary activities and issue phytosanitary certificates.

distillers' dried grain. commodity obtained after removing ethyl alcohol by distilling from the yeast fermentation of a grain or grain mixture by separating the resultant coarse grain fraction of the whole stillage and drying it by methods employed in the grain distilling industry.

duty station. official work location of an ACO in the [Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking System \(PCIT\)](#).

Endangered Species Act (ESA). enabling legislation that provides for the protection of endangered species.

experience. in reference to ACO accreditation, a **minimum** of 1 year experience in plant protection regulatory activities working with or under the supervision of an ACO. This experience **must** occur prior to becoming an ACO ([RSPM No. 8](#)).

Export Certification Specialist (ECS). PPQ specialist who is responsible for maintaining the quality and credibility of the Export Program.

Export Services (ES). headquarters unit within PPQ that maintains a phytosanitary certification system for exported U.S. agricultural commodities.

export summary. interpretation of the plant quarantine requirements of an importing country as compiled in the [Phytosanitary Export Database \(PExD\)](#). Export summaries are **not** to be considered legally authoritative; they are written from translated plant quarantine regulations, official instructions, and other information provided by officials in importing countries.

Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). service program within the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) providing inspection and treatments of grain.

feed. edible materials consumed by animals.

flakes. ingredients rolled or cut into flat pieces with or without prior steam conditioning.

growing season inspection. examining plants during active growth to verify freedom from specific pests or pathogens; also, may include the growing media or soil.

high-quality specialty grain (HQSG). defined in [7 CFR 800.0](#) as grain sold under contract terms that specify quality better than the grade limits for U.S. No. 1 grain, **except** for the factor test weight, or specify "organic" as defined by [7 CFR Part 205](#).

hybrid. for CITES purposes, hybrid is the offspring of two genetically dissimilar taxa where **at least** one parent is listed in a CITES Appendix.

in bulk. commodity **not** in packages or boxes, usually transported in large volume.

inspection certificates. cooperating agencies, such as Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), perform export inspections for specified commodities and issue certificates that may be accepted by PPQ in place of inspection. These certificates are based on officially drawn samples and export inspections conducted by designated personnel. While **not** all certificates are accepted by PPQ in place of inspection, a list of acceptable inspection certificates can be found in [Table 3-5 Acceptable Inspection Certificates and Documents](#).

inspection date. date an Authorized Certification Official (ACO) or other authorized entity conducts the phytosanitary inspection.

issuance date. date a certificate is signed.

laboratory. public laboratories or accredited entities that calibrate, test, identify, or conduct diagnostic examinations ([RSPM No. 9](#)).

letter of credit. document issued by a bank authorizing an applicant to draw a stated amount of money from the issuing bank. Letters of credit are strictly fiduciary documents. For the purposes of phytosanitary certification, letters of credit **cannot** be considered official notifications of changes or exceptions to plant quarantine regulations, which **must** come from the plant protection services of the importing countries. Therefore, letters of credit are **not** phytosanitary documents and **cannot** be referenced on a phytosanitary certificate.

malted grain. sprouted and steamed whole grain from which the radicle has been removed.

meal. grain that has been ground or otherwise reduced in particle size.

official. established, authorized, or performed by a National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) or cooperator.

official communication. phytosanitary requirements from a National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) that must be met to import a commodity. Official communication in the form of an import permit (IP), letter of authorization, published requirements, etc. supersedes or supplements information contained in [PExD](#)

pelletized plant material. agglomerated feed formed by compacting and forcing through die openings by a mechanical process; similar terms: pelleted feed, hard pellet

phytosanitary certificate. certificate patterned after the model certificates of the IPPC (FAO, 1990). In the United States, this is an official document (PPQ Form 577) attesting to commodities' phytosanitary condition and is issued by an Authorized Certification Official (ACO).

Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance & Tracking (PCIT). method of generating PPQ Forms 572, 577, and 579. PCIT tracks the inspection of agricultural products and certifies compliance with plant health standards of importing countries.

Phytosanitary Export Database (PExD). online repository of phytosanitary requirements of U.S.-origin commodities to importing countries.

[Plant Protection Act.](#) legislation providing the authority to prohibit or restrict imports, exports, interstate and intrastate movement of plant pests, plants, plant products, noxious weeds, biological control agents, and means of conveyance.

Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). a unit within the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) designated as the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the United States.

PPQ Form 572, Application for Inspection and Certification of Domestic Plants and Plant Products for Export. official form providing the information needed to complete a phytosanitary certificate and serving as a worksheet for the Authorized Certification Official (ACO) conducting the inspection.

PPQ Form 577, Phytosanitary Certificate. phytosanitary certificate used to certify plants and agricultural commodities for export that have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures. These commodities are considered to be **free** of quarantine pests specified by the importing country and conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing country, including those for regulated, nonquarantine pests.

PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport. phytosanitary certificate for reexport used to certify foreign-origin commodities that officially entered the United States and meet the import requirements of an importing country and have **not** been subjected to the risk of infestation or infection during storage in the United States.

processed plant product. commodity derived from a plant subjected to a procedure believed to have rendered the commodity **free** of plant pests.

safeguarding. series of steps to prevent infestation of commodities after they have been subject to phytosanitary measures.

shipment. a single exportation to one consignee on one conveyance. Multiple phytosanitary certificates may cover one shipment; however, multiple shipments may **not** be covered by a single phytosanitary certificate.

State phytosanitary certificate. document issued by a plant regulatory official of a State Department of Agriculture attesting to the phytosanitary condition of commodities. State phytosanitary certificates are **not** to be used for international trade.

State Plant Regulatory Official (SPRO). administrator of the section of their State's Department of Agriculture who deals with pest prevention and export certification.