

PLANT HEALTH NEWSLETTER

NO.16 (April 2004)



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1. EU Enlargement –Important Notice for Timber Importers

Further to the information contained in our December Newsletter concerning the enlargement of the EU on the 1st May 2004, importers of controlled timber from the 10 applicant countries ie, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are advised that phytosanitary certificates will no longer be required from these countries with effect from 1st May. That is to say that any consignments of controlled timber or wood products or bark being exported to Great Britain on or after the 1st May do not have to be accompanied by phytosanitary certificates issued by the exporting country's Plant Protection Organisation.

The Forestry Commission's Plant Health Inspectors will actively inspect controlled timber and the accompanying phytosanitary certificates relating to consignments, which are shipped before 1st May regardless of the date of landing. These inspections will be chargeable and importers will be invoiced for these inspections. Consignments shipped on or after 1st May will not be subject to chargeable inspections by FC Plant Health Inspectors.

Should importers continue to receive phytosanitary certificates for timber consignments which are shipped after 1st May they should simply retain them for their own records or destroy them as there will no longer be a requirement to present them to the Forestry Commission for inspection and HM Customs clearance purposes.

It should be noted that Great Britain will maintain its Protected Zone status against certain pests of conifer trees post 1st May. Therefore any coniferous wood, wood product or bark, which is being imported from another EU Member State and may present a plant health risk eg softwood logs retaining bark, loose conifer bark, trees of conifers over 3 metres in height will continue to be required to be accompanied by a plant passport and meet the landing requirements of Great Britain.

If you have any enquiries about the effects of EU Enlargement please do not hesitate to contact your local Plant Health Regional Manager or the Plant Health Service, Edinburgh.

2. Plant Health Service – Staff Changes

In preparation for the effects of the EU Enlargement reported in the previous paragraphs the FC's Plant Health Service performed an internal management review of the staffing and inspection resource requirements needed to provide an efficient inspection service post 1st May.

The outcome of this review concluded that the unit could reduce the Regional Manager staffing compliment by one and therefore it was decided that the RM South England and South Wales post previously occupied by Mike Willingham would not be filled when he retired on 5th March.

In addition to reducing the RM staffing compliment we was also decided to re-organise our Regional Management area boundaries which would take into account another staffing change ie Russ Collin's departure from the FC on career break terms on 30th June.

Russ will be replaced by Stewart Snape who effectively took up post as the new Plant Health Regional Manager (North) at the beginning of April. Stewart, who is based in Silvan House, will become responsible for all operational Plant Health matters in Scotland and the North of England as far south as the counties of, Cheshire, Greater Manchester West and North Yorkshire (excluding Humberside ports) and North Wales.

Steve Mears our current Regional Manager for East England will become our Regional Manager (South) and will be responsible for all operational Plant Health matters for all the counties in England south of the ones mentioned above and in South Wales. (see Map at Appendix 1)

Ian Brownlee will continue in his role as Operations Manager and having transferred his Regional Manager (Scotland) role to Stewart Snape he will devote more time to the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme

Contact numbers for the operational team are –

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3. Commission Decision 2004/95/EC and the Canadian Heat Treatment Wood Products Certification Program (CHTWPCP)

With effect from 1st February 2004 the EU implemented Commission Decision 2004/95/EC which details an agreement with the Canadian Authorities to trial for a period of one year a new coniferous sawn wood importing system which does not require consignments arriving in the EU from Canada to be accompanied with a phytosanitary, mill or industry certificate. This 'paperless' system is known as the Canadian Heat Treated Wood Products Certification Program (CHTWPCP). The Program is an official certification system for the export of wood products to countries, including member countries of the European Union, requiring heat treatment prior to entry. Heat treated wood from the CHTWPCP provides certified wood products used in the Canadian Wood Packaging Certification Program. Details of the programme can be found on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA's) website ie -

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/for/cwpc/chtwpcpe.shtml>

A copy of Commission Decision 2004/95/EC can be obtained from the following website -
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_028/l_02820040131en00220025.pdf

As at 20 April 2004 the CFAI website only contained details of one mill in Canada, which is registered with the CHTWPCP but more are expected to register in due course.

For importers of sawn timber from Canada this new system will mean that timber sourced from mills registered with the CHTWPCP will need to be marked in such a way to permit our inspectors to link the physical consignment to the accompanying commercial documentation. This will have to carry a declaration in the form prescribed in the Decision and will be inspected.

When performing a physical inspection of timber our inspectors will require to review the original commercial documents prior to authorising Customs clearance. The inspector will not need to take possession of the original documentation or take a photocopy of it when a physical inspection of the consignment is performed, except in the case of non-compliance. If the consignment is being cleared without physical inspection the importer/agent will be required to supply the inspector with a copy of the commercial documents accompanying the consignment before effecting Customs clearance.

On all occasions the inspector will check the details of the source mill on the commercial documentation against the list of CHTWPCP register as provided on CFAI's website.

As mentioned above this is a trial Programme, which ends on 1st July 2005 and therefore if you have any comments about its effectiveness during the course of the trial please let us know. We will also monitor the Program and may seek changes if necessary.

4. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR WOOD PACKAGING MATERIAL – ISPM15 – IMPLEMENTATION DEVELOPMENTS

Wood Packaging Manufacturers will already be aware of the unexpected publication in The Gazette of India of details of new landing requirements for wood packaging material, timber and agricultural produce. The publication of this document was shortly followed by a World Trade Organisation notification, which gave the EU Member States and other countries the opportunity to comment on the detail of the publicised changes to India's landing requirements.

The EU has submitted its comments and a formal response is awaited and as soon as we receive further official notifications from the Plant Protection Organisation of India concerning the comments or other developments we will publish these on our website.

This rapid unexpected publication, which has already been amended twice caused great confusion amongst exporters and demonstrated to all concerned how difficult it is to keep up to

date with developments especially when details of changes are received from various unofficial sources as well.

We are endeavouring to keep exporters as up to date as possible by publishing official notifications on our website as soon as we receive them.

5. Future Newsletters – Online Publication Only

As most businesses that we have contact with now have access to the internet and have emailing facilities we have decided that in future we will only publish our newsletters on our website.

If you would like to be notified of the publication of the latest edition of our Newsletter please provide us with details of your email address.

Additionally if the publication of our Newsletter solely via the internet will inconvenience you please let us know by contacting us at the address below.

6. Electronic Phytosanitary Application Form

We are delighted to report that our online electronic phytosanitary application form facility has proved to be a great success with exporters and therefore, as per our last Newsletter, we would like to encourage as many of you as possible to make use of this facility.

In order to use the system you will need to have access to Internet Explorer Version 4 or later. It will allow you to apply for phytosanitary certificates over the Internet using 'on screen' application forms. It will be necessary to register with the FC first. You will then be allocated with a unique customer reference (password) which will be specific to your applicant name. This is for security purposes.

If you will be applying for phytosanitary certificates on behalf of other companies, then you will be allocated with unique customer references for those as well. After submitting your initial application electronically the applicant contact details will be stored on your PC via cookies. The information stored in the cookie will be available on your PC only and not to any other party. Unfortunately, however if you apply on behalf of more than one company the contact details saved will be those relating to the company to which the most recent application referred. Once submitted the application is submitted to the FC via the Internet to a database.

We will check the details on the application, make any necessary amendments and produce a printed, signed and officially stamped certificate which will be posted to you by first class mail.

For registration details contact us using the information provided below.

7. Charges for Export Certification Services

Applicants for phytosanitary certificates will be aware that charging has been suspended while a review was undertaken. That process has now been completed and it has been determined that a proper legal basis for charging is needed. It has also been agreed that charges collected between 1 October 1996, when the Import and Export (Plant Health Fees) (Forestry)(Great Britain) Order 1990 was revoked and 14 May 2000, when charges were suspended, were collected unlawfully and must be refunded.

Plans are in progress to contact all those who are due a refund to make repayment, plus interest. If you think you are due a refund, and have not heard from us by the end of May, please contact the Plant Health Service with details.

We also plan to introduce the necessary legal base to resume charging and we anticipate resuming the collection of fees for the issue of phytosanitary certificates and associated inspections, probably in July. Fees will be charged at the same rate that was in force when they were suspended: an application for a certificate, including issue, will cost £15 and inspections will be charged at £27 for the first hour and £10 for each additional half hour or part thereof. Fees will not be subject to VAT.

Plant Health Regional Boundary Map (overleaf).....

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