

# **An Introduction to Phytosanitary Certification For the Export of Plants & Plant Products from New Zealand**

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## Acronyms & Definitions

ISPM	International Standard for Phytosanitary Measurers
ICPR	Importing Countries Phytosanitary Requirements
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IVA	Independent verification agency
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organisation
Operator	The legally identifiable person or organisation responsible for the performance of the Operator System.
PMAC	Plants Market Access Council Incorporated
Pest	Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (includes soil).
PEO	Plant Exports Operations
Phytosanitary	Plant health
Quarantine Pest	A pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled.
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
WTO	World Trade Organization

**Note:** A full list of definitions associated with export phytosanitary certification may be found in the PEO series of Standards - refer [www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm](http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm)

# 1. Introduction

This document has been developed to provide an introduction to:

- New Zealand's obligations under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for phytosanitary (plant health) certification.
- New Zealand's Export Phytosanitary Certification System.

## 2. New Zealand's Obligations Under the IPPC

The IPPC is an international treaty that is designed to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products throughout the world. It also promotes the establishment of appropriate measures to control plant pests.

Part of New Zealand's commitment to the IPPC is to provide export phytosanitary certification. The purpose of export phytosanitary certification is to ensure that the international trading of plants and plant products doesn't spread unwanted plant pests, especially to countries where these pests do not already exist or are under official control. Essentially it is about ensuring and maintaining plant health. The New Zealand Government has designated MAF as the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) to ensure that New Zealand is meeting the requirements of the IPPC.

The IPPC is also recognised by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This legal agreement recognises the IPPC as the international organisation responsible for phytosanitary standard setting and harmonisation of phytosanitary measures which affect trade.

Most countries that are signatories to the IPPC require phytosanitary certification from exporting countries. Under the IPPC a series of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) have been developed. Some of these impact on and provide guidelines for export certification.

Key obligations under the IPPC (and the ISPMs) that impact on export phytosanitary certification include:

### Issuance of Phytosanitary Certificates

The phytosanitary certificate:

- Is a Government to Government certificate of compliance and must meet a specific IPPC format.
- States that the produce has been inspected prior to export and meets the importing country's requirements.
- In New Zealand, it is signed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) as the NPPO.

Regulatory requirements of both the importing and exporting countries must be met prior to phytosanitary certificates being issued. These requirements are commonly documented in acts, regulations and standards such as:

- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC/ISPM Standards).  
[www.ippc.int/IPPC/En/default.htm](http://www.ippc.int/IPPC/En/default.htm)
- Importing countries phytosanitary requirements (ICPRs).

**Note:** Available to the New Zealand industry on a password protected area of the MAF website.

- MAF Plants Biosecurity Standards (e.g. the PEO series of standards).  
[www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm](http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm)

**Note:** There are some importing countries that do not require phytosanitary certificates for some specific products.

### **Surveillance of Growing Plants**

This requirement involves the reporting of the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests that may be of quarantine concern to an importing country. This allows importing countries to monitor the pests being found and consider if they are of quarantine concern.

### **Inspection of Export Consignments of Plants and Plant Products**

This involves phytosanitary inspection to confirm that the plants or plant products within a consignment comply with the importing country's phytosanitary requirements prior to a certificate being issued.

### **Disinfestation or Disinfection of Export Consignments of Plants and Plant Products**

In addition to inspection, some importing countries require plants and plant products to be treated prior to export as a means of lowering the possibility of specific pests being introduced to their country.

### **Phytosanitary Security of Export Consignments after Certification**

This requires the application of specific measures to ensure consignments of plants and plant products that have been inspected and passed for export are protected from being substituted with non inspected product and infested with pests prior to export.

### **Establishment of 'Country/Area Freedom' from Specific Pests**

Where a NPPO operates the appropriate ISPM it may certify that all or part of their country is free of a specified pest and the official terms used are "country, area or production site freedom".

### 3. The New Zealand Export Phytosanitary Certification System

For an overview of the New Zealand export phytosanitary certification system refer to Appendix 1.

While MAF has overall accountability for New Zealand's export phytosanitary certification system, service delivery has been delegated to Independent Verification Agencies (IVAs) who are accredited by MAF to act on their behalf.

IVAs are contracted by accredited operators to undertake compliance audits of their operator systems and by exporters operating on end-point consignment inspection (see below).

#### 3.1 MAF PLANTS BIOSECURITY EXPORT OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

The Plants Export Operations (PEO) series of standards outline the operational specifications within the MAF export certification system for the provision of phytosanitary certification. This PEO series of standards may be found on the MAF website.

[www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm](http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/exports/plants/certification/index.htm)

The PEO series of standards provide MAF with a formal administrative process for the delegation of their authority to IVAs and operators providing phytosanitary inspection, audit, post inspection security, and/or documentation services.

#### 3.2 EXPORT CERTIFICATION OPTIONS

The majority of countries in the IPPC provide export phytosanitary certification via an end-point or final consignment inspection process just prior to export, with the certification inspection activities being undertaken by official "NPPO" inspector(s).

Within New Zealand MAF has taken advantage of the recently updated IPPC and is one of the very few contracting countries to provide exporters of plants and plant products with two options for securing export phytosanitary certification. These options are:

##### 1. End-point consignment inspection

Immediately prior to export, plants and/or plant products from each grower lot in a consignment are subjected to phytosanitary inspection for compliance to the importing country's phytosanitary requirements.

##### 2. MAF Accredited Operator Inspection Systems

This option allows MAF to accredit industry operated phytosanitary inspection systems. Once an industry operator's system gains formal MAF accreditation, the operator undertakes inspection activities on behalf of the Director MAF Plants Biosecurity. To retain their accreditation status, accredited operators and their staff are subject to ongoing compliance assessments through IVA audits.

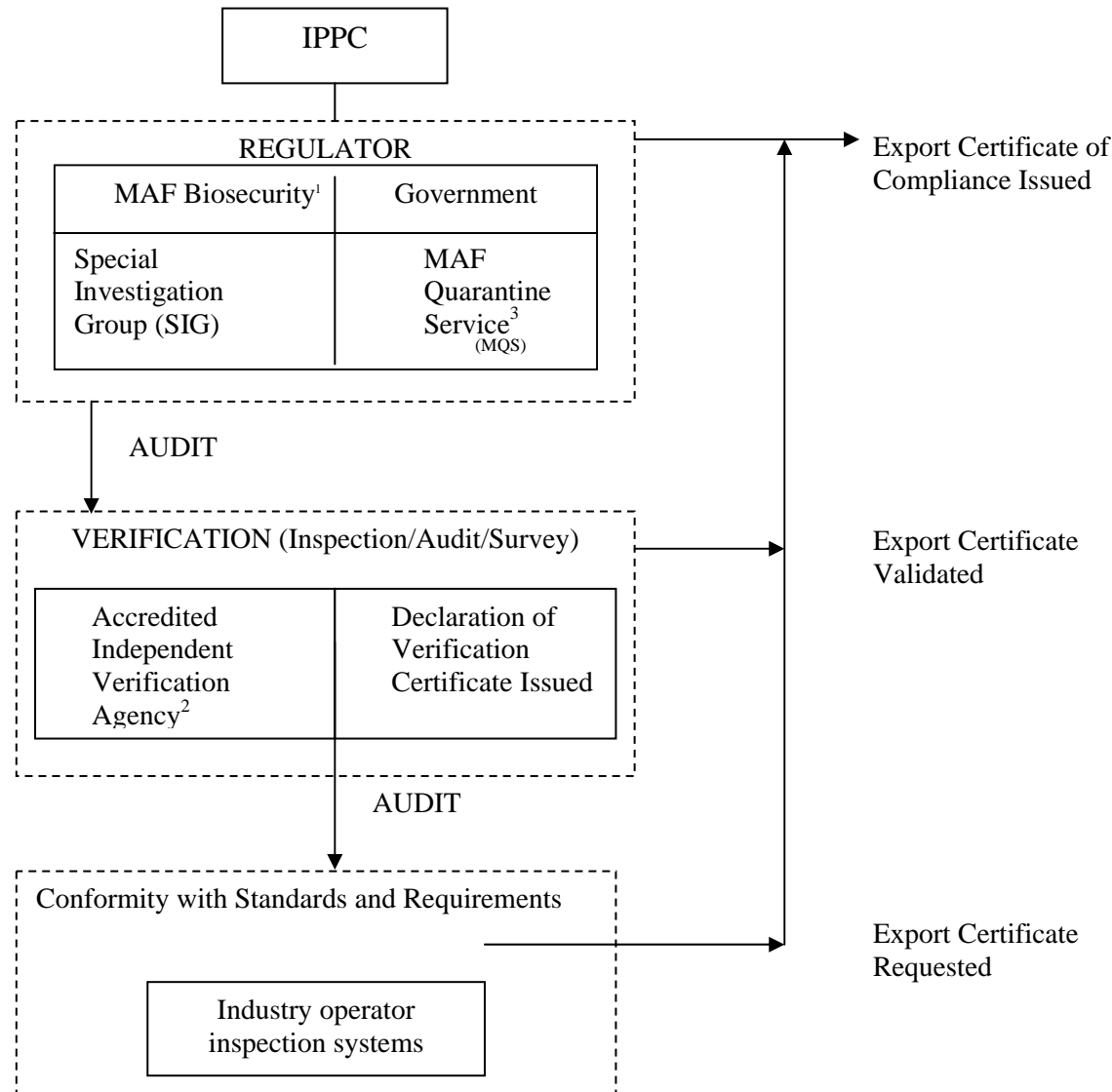
For some years now many operators have chosen the second option, recognising that as production increased, end-point inspection would be both costly and time consuming.

### **3.3 EXPORT OF NON-INSPECTED PRODUCT**

MAF Plants Biosecurity operates a policy in compliance with IPPC that ensures phytosanitary certification is not made available to an exporter where an incomplete phytosanitary inspection has taken place within New Zealand prior to export.

**Note:** Past experience has shown the processes and costs required to correct situations where exports of non-inspected produce has occurred are very significant.

## Appendix 1 - MAF Plants Biosecurity Model for Export Phytosanitary Certification



**MAF Biosecurity** is responsible for:

- ascertaining and negotiating importing countries' phytosanitary requirements
- developing export certification operational standards (in consultation with Industry)
- accrediting IVA's and operator's systems, staff and facilities
- managing audits of the certification process
- providing official phytosanitary assurances through phytosanitary certificates verified by a MAF accredited IVA and signed by **MQS** for produce complying with the importing country's phytosanitary requirements. **SIG** carries out audits of verification agencies and certification processes to ensure conformity with the export certification standards.

**IVAs** assess and verify that MAF accredited industry operator's inspection systems meet MAF certification standards & importing country phytosanitary requirements. IVAs also provide endpoint inspection, pest surveys and certificate verification services.

**PMAC** is responsible for:

- developing export certification standards in consultation with MAF Plants Biosecurity (Exports)
- funding the maintenance of an export certification system through levies collected from phytosanitary certificates.

**Industry operators** (e.g. exporters) are responsible for meeting MAF export certification standards and importing countries' phytosanitary requirements.

1. MAF Biosecurity is also responsible for developing and maintaining import standards covering New Zealand's zoo-sanitary and phytosanitary biosecurity interests.

2. Either AgriQuality New Zealand or Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS).

3. MQS is primarily responsible for providing national technical inspection and clearance services for incoming overseas passengers, cargo, vessels, aircraft and mail as well as performing import phytosanitary inspections of plants and plant products. It is also responsible for the maintenance and control of forest, plant and animal quarantine and containment facilities.