



## Certification Review Project Newsletter

December 2015

This issue offers answers to the most commonly asked questions from MPI approved organisations (MAOs) and provides some guidance on the systems' documentation required for phytosanitary inspection, competency and pest identification.

### Progress update

The implementation phase of the review project is now well underway and the plant exports team will be busy until the end of March 2016 completing reviews of the operating systems that have been evaluated and recommended for approval by the Independent Verification Agencies (IVAs).

Please be aware that completing reviews of this large number of amended systems is likely to affect the time it takes to complete other activities or respond to new requests. We ask for your patience while we concentrate on this important task.

### Deadlines for MAOs

#### Seasonal operators

Your system must be approved as complying with the new standard before the start of your next export season or 31 March 2016 – whichever is earlier.

#### Systems that operate year round

Your system must be approved as complying with the new standard by the date of your next system audit or 31 March 2016 – whichever is earlier.

#### When to send in your system

We recommend that you keep in regular contact with your IVA and seek their advice as you plan and write the amendments to your operating system. You should submit your updated system to your IVA at least six weeks before the deadline for approval. This is to give your IVA assessor sufficient time to properly evaluate it and discuss any changes with you before it is passed on to MPI for final approval. MPI will provide provisional approval for those organisations whose systems have been recommended for approval by their IVA prior to the start of their commodity's season. Please be aware however, that if you submit your system late or submit an incomplete/non-compliant system, you may face suspension and/or termination of your approval.

### Certificates of approval for updated systems

As a result of numerous requests from MAOs, you will receive a certificate as well as a copy of your signed contract once your system is approved by MPI.



When you send your amended system to your IVA, please remember to provide two signed contracts of approval. One will be retained on file by MPI and the other will be returned to you. The contract is available as a pdf file from the MPI website, follow the link here. <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/8692>

### Competency guidelines

Writing procedures to meet the new requirements for staff competency assessment can be challenging. To help you, MPI has produced two guidelines to better explain the requirements and provide examples. If you would like copies, please request the following from your IVA:

- » Competency assessment procedures for pest identification.
- » Competency assessment procedures for phytosanitary inspection staff.

### Why accurate pest identification matters

MPI's phytosanitary certificates give an assurance to the government of an importing country that New Zealand plant products have been inspected and found significantly free from their specified quarantine pests. It is vital that our phytosanitary inspections stand up to scrutiny. This is why the requirements for pest identification competency have been strengthened. In order to help you determine the right level of competency for your phytosanitary inspectors and know when to send suspected pests to an MPI approved pest identifier, MPI has provided summary document that sets out the main points to consider. If you would like a copy please request the following from your IVA.

What pest is that? A guide for phytosanitary inspection

## MPI recognised pest identification workshops

Several industry bodies are developing pest identification training resources and assessments for their MAOs. The Avocado industry was the first to develop an industry wide training programme and assessment which was recognised by MPI in September. MPI's Plant Health and Environment Laboratory has provided technical advice and feedback on the resources developed for these courses. If your industry is interested in developing something similar, please contact Plant Exports at [plantexports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:plantexports@mpi.govt.nz).

A register of recognised workshops can be found on the MPI website. Follow the link here <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/resources/registers-and-lists/pest-identification-workshops/>

## Awareness workshops complete

MPI would like to extend its thanks everyone who attended a workshop, especially those people who travelled long distances to attend. A series of 33 workshops was held at key locations around the country to help MAOs in the plant sectors (including forestry) understand the impact of the revised standards on their businesses.

The final workshop was held in Dunedin on 17 September. In all, the workshops were attended by over 800 people from 462 MAOs. Representatives from various industry bodies, a number of consultants and IVAs also attended and contributed usefully to the discussion.

Feedback from participants has been largely positive. The workshop evaluation showed that participants found the overview of the plant export certification system and its international context particularly valuable. Most participants reported that the information presented was relevant and easy to understand, although some commented that it could have been better targeted to meet their industry's particular needs. The workshops themselves provided a valuable opportunity for people from all sectors of industry and MPI to meet face to face and draw on each other's ideas and experience. One participant summed it up like this:

"The workshop was great. We go away realising the responsibility we hold for doing an important job well."

## FAQS

### 1. Can I use general classifications such as "rots" and "live insects" to describe or identify pests in my system?

General classifications can be used to describe pests and they can also be defined as the 'level of assessed ability' for pest identification competency purposes. If you choose to use these high level classifications, be aware that when you are inspecting a sample from a homogeneous lot, you can only make a decision to accept product for export certification if the pest is identified to the appropriate level, i.e. you must be able to confirm that it is not an actionable pest.

### 2. When do I need to keep a record of the pests my phytosanitary staff are competent to identify?

When acceptance decisions are being made based on the identification of a pest you must list all pests that your staff are competent to identify within your system.

### 3. What criteria must an industry training course meet to be recognised by MPI?

MPI recognised industry training courses must:

- » be run by a competent trainer/assessor;
- » use course content and teaching materials that have been approved by MPI; and
- » have a robust competency assessment that includes demonstrating the ability to consistently identify pests at the appropriate level and differentiating between pests with similar characteristics.

### 4. Can competent staff from another MAO conduct pest identifications for me?

Competent staff from another MAO can undertake pest identifications on your behalf as long as you document in your system that this is where pests are being sent for identification and by whom.

### 5. Can I send my staff to another industry's MPI recognised training course?

Yes, but the competency will only apply to the pests that are covered in the course.

### 6. Who should I record in my system as the contact person for IVA liaison?

The person in your organisation who is responsible for liaising with your IVA, not the name of your IVA contact.

**7. What should I include in my staff competency assessment procedure?**

If you are assessing staff competency internally, your staff competency assessment procedures must describe what the assessment is for, how it is carried out and who is responsible for the assessment. Examples of procedures are provided in the guidelines for competency assessment of phytosanitary inspection staff and pest identification. Contact your IVA for copies of these guidelines.

**8. How do I select a random 600 unit sample from a homogeneous lot of packed and palletised product?**

A random sample must be an unbiased representation of a lot. To ensure that the sample you are taking is unbiased, draw units from various pallets across the lot in such a way that each pallet is equally likely to be sampled.

**9. My supplier's production sites are not contiguous. Can I inspect a sample from a grower line as if it were a homogeneous lot?**

A homogeneous lot is defined as a volume of plant product subject to the same pest management regime that has been produced within a pre-determined place of production, where the defective units within the lot occur independently of each other and the fraction of defective plant product is constant throughout the lot.

MPI will allow phytosanitary inspection of samples from lots that have been sourced from the same grower who

has non-contiguous places of production within the same district as long as they have been subjected to the same pest management regime. Before you submit your amended system for approval you must request a dispensation from MPI by emailing [plantexports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:plantexports@mpi.govt.nz)

**10. Which phytosanitary inspection procedures must I document in my operating system?**

If you are conducting phytosanitary inspections you must include the following documented procedures in your system

- » 3.1 Identification of lots for inspection
- » 3.2.1 100 percent inspection
- » 3.2.2 Sampling plans
- » 3.2.3 Fully processed plant products
- » 3.3 (1) Inspection procedures
- » 3.4 (1-3) Decision making
- » 3.5 (1-2) Management of non-conforming product
- » 3.6 Market eligibility

You may elect to include documented procedures for other sections of the Technical standard: Phytosanitary inspection if they are relevant and useful to you. They will be subject to review and audit if included.

You can find a list of FAQs on the MPI website, follow the link here: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/requirements/plant-exports-certification-standards/>

