



# Plant Export Operations Branch

## Work Instruction

Sampling and inspection for export  
certification of completed  
consignments and lots  
(fresh fruit and vegetables)

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# 1. Purpose

Work instructions for sampling and inspecting fresh fruit and vegetables for export certification purposes.

Applies to Department of Agriculture (department) authorised officers (AOs) sampling and inspecting completed consignments and lots of fresh fruit and vegetables that require phytosanitary inspection and certification.

# 2. Work health and safety

As an AO you must not enter a site unless you are confident it is safe and are aware of Work Health and Safety (WH&S) hazards.

Important! All sites are different and you must always comply with the department's WH&S policies and relevant state or territory WH&S policies.

Refer to volume 16 in the Plant Export Operations Manual (PEOM) for more details.

# 3. Activities

## 3.1 Preparing for sampling and inspecting

### 3.1.1 Pre-inspection tasks

- Receive a request for an inspection of a fresh fruit and/or vegetable consignment.
- Check if there is a case in Manual of Importing Country Requirements (MICO R) Plants for each product.
  - If there is not a case in MICO R Plants you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they need to obtain the import requirements from the importing country authority and email these to the MICO R Plants administrator. The import requirements will need to be assessed and MICO R Plants updated before the consignment can be inspected.
- Check the MICO R Plants case for each product to see if the importing country authority requires an import permit.
  - If an import permit is required and has not been provided you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they need to present an import permit before the consignment can be inspected.

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- If an import permit is required and has been provided at time of inspection you need to check it is valid as per the Work Instruction: *Validating supporting documents for plant exports*.
  - If the import permit is not valid you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they need to obtain a valid import permit before the consignment can be inspected.
- Check the import requirements on the import permit match the MICoR Plants case for each product.
  - If the import requirements do not match you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they need to email the import permit to the MICoR Plants administrator. The import permit will be assessed and MICoR Plants updated before the consignment can be inspected.

**Note: If you are a departmental inspection AO then you do not have to complete the following steps as these have been done for you by the appointment AO.**

If you are an external inspection AO:

- Check what form the NOI must be presented in as per the Guideline: *Issuance of certification for plant exports*.
  - If the client has not presented the correct form of NOI you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they must present the correct form of NOI before the consignment can be inspected.
- If the NOI is a Request for Permit (RFP) check that it is at initial (INIT) or final (FINL) status.
  - If the RFP is not at INIT or FINL status you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they must present the RFP in the correct status before the consignment can be inspected.
- If the NOI is an EX28 check that it has been completed correctly as per the Reference: *Completion of a Notice of Intention (EX28) User Guide*.
  - If the EX28 has not been completed correctly you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they must present a correctly completed EX28 before the consignment can be inspected.
- If the NOI is an EX28 check that the export registered establishment (ERE) on the NOI is currently registered by checking the Certificate of Registration displayed at the ERE or by checking with the department's regional office.
  - If the ERE is not currently registered you cannot continue with the inspection.

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- Advise the client that they must present a correctly completed EX28 before the consignment can be inspected.
- Check that the ERE has one or more of the plant export registered operations as per the Reference: *Registered operation codes for plant export registered establishments*.
  - If the ERE does not have one or more plant export registered operations you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that the ERE must be registered for plant exports before the consignment can be inspected.
- Check whether the client needs to complete any manual certification as per the MICoR Plants case, that they have used the correct template and that the template has been completed correctly as per the:
  - Reference: *Completion of a Phytosanitary Certificate (E16) User Guide*
  - Reference: *Completion of a Ship's Holds Certificate (EX175) User Guide*
  - Reference: *Completion of a Declaration and Certificate as to Condition (EX188) User Guide*
  - Reference: *Completion of a Certification as to Condition (EX46A) User Guide*
  - Reference: *Completion of a Phytosanitary Certificate for Re-Export (EX25) User Guide*
  - Reference: *Completion of a Radioactivity Statement User Guide*.
    - If these certificates have not been completed correctly you cannot continue with the inspection.
    - Advise the client that they need to complete the certificate correctly before the consignment can be inspected.

**Note: The following steps apply to both departmental and external inspection AOs.**

- Check that you have received all supporting documents required prior to inspection as per the Reference: *Plant export documents and treatments checklists* and the MICoR Plants case/s.
  - If all the supporting documents have not been received you cannot continue with the inspection.
  - Advise the client that they need to obtain the supporting documents before the consignment can be inspected.
- Check that the supporting documents you have received are valid as per the Work Instruction: *Validating supporting documents for plant exports*.
  - If any of the supporting documents are not valid you cannot continue with the inspection.

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- Advise the client that they need to obtain valid supporting documents before the consignment can be inspected.
- On site:
  - ensure appropriate equipment is at hand
  - ensure inspection area is fit for purpose:
    - clean
    - free from pests, contamination and sources of cross contamination
    - correctly lit (at least 600 lux)
    - has a waste bin
- Consignment or lot:
  - ensure overall condition and exterior is homogenous (refer to export compliance record)
  - ensure trade description requirements have been met
  - ensure, where an entire consignment or lot is to be inspected, that it is fully assembled and accessible for sampling (for example, must have access to at least 2 sides of pallets)
  - confirm total number of units
  - determine sampling rate (refer 3.7 selection of samples)
  - ensure the overall makeup of the consignment or lot matches the details in the export documentation and that the phytosanitary integrity of the product is maintained.

Note: If quantities are not obvious, it may be necessary to count packages. Only break down pallets if in doubt or if access to particular samples is needed.

## Single stage sampling method

Use a single stage sampling method, accepting or rejecting a consignment or lot based on the result of a single sample. The sample includes the package as well as the product.

## Sampling rate

Sample the consignment or lot using either rate below:

1. 600 units
2. two per cent (minimum three packages) or the number of packages in each consignment (always round up).

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3. Let industry select the sampling rate if the importing country does not specify one. For example, a two per cent sample for a consignment of 223 cartons will be five cartons (the number of cartons is always rounded up).

## **.1 Selecting the sample**

- .1.1 An entire consignment or lot must be made available in one place at one time for sampling.
- .1.2 Draw samples from any part of the consignment or lot, which may require moving of pallets for access.
- .1.3 Check that trade description requirements are met and that the goods are in clean, new packages. Apply the trade description as a pallet label where products are unitised.
- .1.4 Do not proceed with inspection if the consignment or lot does not comply. In this case, complete an approved export compliance record.

## **.2 Sampling**

- .2.1 Take a random sample (as far as is practical) from items such as packages, cartons, punnets, trays and bags, across the entire consignment (exception: mixed consignments).
- .2.2 Cover all packers and as many growers as possible in the sample selection.
- .2.3 For entire consignments or lots, take samples from layers of pallets (for example, first sample, top layer; second sample, second layer; third sample, third layer; fourth sample top layer; fifth sample, second layer and so on). Take samples from other parts of pallets if you need to (for example, consignments or lots of mixed product).
- .2.4 Ensure, if a consignment or lot contains more than one variety of the same type of fruit or vegetable (that is, navelina/leng/chislett = oranges), that the sample is taken proportionally across the entire consignment.
- .2.5 Determine the number of packages to be selected from the consignment or lot to make up the required sample size.
- .2.6 Identify selected sample packages through any means acceptable to the product's owner. This could be by removing or turning packages or making discrete marks or applying discrete stickers.
- .2.7 Take samples to the inspection area for inspecting. Handling packages and re-packing produce is industry's responsibility.

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### **.3 Inspecting samples**

- .3.1 More than 90 different fruits and vegetables are inspected for export, so these inspection techniques are a general guide.
- .3.2 Check the sample package again for the trade description.
- .3.3 Ensure the package to be used for the sample is new and clean and wear gloves to protect yourself and the product being handled.
- .3.4 Decide how best to handle the contents.
- .3.5 Telescopic cartons may be turned over and produce left in the lid and transferred to the inner carton during inspection.
- .3.6 For some types of produce, packages need to be emptied onto an inspection bench.
- .3.7 Use specially-designed inspection benches for particular products, such as onions and potatoes that need to be re-bagged.
- .3.8 Open inner packages, such as punnets or bags, to properly inspect produce.
- .3.9 Ensure you do not remove blooms on products such as table grapes and plums, since these provide natural protection.
- .3.10 Inspect commodities you may not be able to raise onto inspection benches, such as watermelons, using sufficient lighting over bulk bins.
- .3.11 When first opening a package, and before handling the produce, inspect the surface for contamination such as leaves, trash and soil.
- .3.12 Inspect both the inside and outside of package.
- .3.13 If the package is bagged, look over the outside of the bag and inside the bag after tipping.
- .3.14 Pick up one piece of produce at a time to examine.
- .3.15 Do not roll pieces past and do not over handle. Inspectors will need specific on the job training to handle certain products, for example, table grapes, strawberries, asparagus, pineapples, citrus etc.
- .3.16 Turn each product over and examine the surface for rot, weed seeds, scale, contaminants such as soil, and arthropods in any form—from eggs to adults.
- .3.17 If the product has an attached calyx, look for pests under it (for example, pest eggs, fullers rose weevil, mealy bug and mites).

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- .3.18 For citrus protocol countries lift 10 per cent of calyces (unless a smaller percentage is specified in the work plan). You do not need to routinely lift calyces for non-protocol countries.
- .3.19 For strawberries and some other berries, lightly rub calyces together to dislodge pests.
- .3.20 Use a hand lens when needed, including for products with harbourage sites at the base (for example, the navel end of an orange and the base of fruits such as apples, pears, quinces, kiwifruit and pomegranates).
- .3.21 Look for sooty mould, webbing, honeydew or other evidence of mealy bug or similar pests.
- .3.22 Use magnification or cutting to verify anything you detected during your visual inspection. Only cut if there is evidence of a pest, damage, abnormal soft areas or breakdown of fruit. Use a conical cut, which will usually avoid damaging specimens.
- .3.23 Be alert for the wide variety of symptoms indicating pest presence, such as:
- chewed product—insects such as caterpillars
  - soft spots and rot in fruit—fruit fly or disease
  - stings—fruit fly
  - holes—borers or weevils
  - webbing—caterpillars such as loopers or leaf rollers
  - speckling on the leaf or blemishes on product—mites, thrips or aphids
  - sticky honeydew and associated sooty mould (fine black powder)—aphids, mealy bug
  - uneven yellowing of leaf or spots on product—virus
  - rolled leaves—thrips or caterpillars
  - leaf spotting—may be yellowish, dark brown, black and possibly with yellow halo—bacteria
  - water-soaked areas on leaf—bacteria or fungus
  - powdery appearance—fungus, mildew
  - galls—gall wasp or nematodes.

## **.4 Clarification and exceptions**

Packages, as well as product must always be inspected.

### **.4.1 Minimum sample size**

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Regardless of the sampling rate chosen (600 units or two per cent), sample a minimum of three packages (except for consignments or lots of one to two packages) and fully inspect.

Example of two per cent sampling: if the exporter chooses a two per cent sample for a consignment of 110 cartons the sample size will be three cartons.

Note: Always round up the number of cartons in the sample. Therefore, if the two per cent sample of 110 cartons is 2.2 cartons the sample size will be three cartons.

#### .4.2 Punnets

Regardless of the sample rate chosen (600 units or two per cent), ensure the sample size is the same and that each punnet is a separate package for sampling purposes. This applies to all vegetables and fruit in punnets except those in mixed consignments (refer section 3.7.4).

Example of 600 unit sampling: In cases of extremely small fruit, such as blueberries, if there are approximately 50 fruit to a punnet randomly choose six trays or cartons per consignment and fully inspect two punnets per tray or carton for a sample size of 600 units.

Example of two per cent sampling: Sample two per cent of the number of trays and then inspect all punnets in each sample tray by removing them and turning them over. Open a minimum of three punnets per tray for detailed inspection. You may need all punnets in the sample to be emptied for inspection if the punnets are non-transparent.

#### .4.3 Bins

##### .4.3.1 Selecting the sample:

- for all consignments and lots, sample proportionally across the entire consignment
- for consignments and lots comprising less than six bins, sample proportionally across all bins
- for consignments and lots comprising more than six bins each, sample from as few as six bins if the product is homogeneous (that is, 600 units = 100 from each bin).

##### .4.3.2 Sampling:

- ensure trade description is accessible and correct
- take produce from the same corner area of each bin (as near as practical)

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- continue sampling until the required number of units are taken (600 units or two per cent by volume or weight of the product—two per cent is generally not practical for bulk bins)
- identify the sample with the relevant bin number and grower details
- have samples taken to the inspection area.

#### .4.4 Mixed consignments

.4.4.1 Be aware that some consignments and lots are not homogeneous and include different product types (for example, South Pacific Island and Middle East hotel trade import consignments containing a large number of different types of fruits and/or vegetables).

Note: Mixed consignments are unique and therefore have their own sampling processes, as follows (do not use these processes for any other consignments).

#### .4.4.2 Sampling rate

Choose either the 600 units or two per cent sampling rate for packages, cartons, bags or trays in the consignment, unless otherwise stipulated by the importing country.

#### .4.4.3 Targeting

Sample commodities, where possible, from higher risk categories (for both 600 unit and two per cent samples). To determine the risk category, consider factors such as:

- approved quarantine treatments that have been applied (low risk)
- problems currently experienced with pests and/or diseases (high risk)
- climatic or seasonal conditions which may encourage pests and/or disease (medium risk)
- different growers or packhouses (medium risk)
- variations in pathway (variable risk)
- volume of high risk versus volume of medium risk—for example, a small quantity of a high-risk commodity may not present as high a risk as a large quantity of a medium-risk commodity.

#### .4.4.4 Selecting the sample

Take the 600 unit or two per cent sample from across as much of the consignment as possible.

With the two per cent sample inspect the contents of each sample carton or package (including the packaging). This means the two

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per cent sample must comprise whole or full packages (except in the case of bulk bins).

## **.5 Recording inspection results**

- .5.1 Record inspection details on the approved export compliance record, using one record for each consignment or lot inspected. When operating under an Approved Arrangement you will need to use the approved export compliance record.

## **.6 Rejecting samples**

- .6.1 Apply zero tolerance, in line with Approved Arrangements, if any sample contains pests, soil, weed seeds and/or contaminants and reject the entire consignment or lot—unless otherwise specified by an importing country. This applies to all consignments, whether single or mixed.
- .6.2 Consult with the department’s regional supervisor or manager first, if needed, since some minor pests are spread worldwide.
- .6.3 If any part of a consignment or lot fails the 600 unit or two per cent inspection, reject it unless you are clear that parts of the consignment or lot have been secured against the pest or contamination that gave rise to rejection. Secured means that packages are fully enclosed or separated (at all times).
- .6.4 You may pass parts of a consignment or lot that are secure from pests or contamination, but only if a full sampling rate is applied to the passed component. This means sampling additional units or packages to make up the 600 units or two per cent.
- .6.5 Rejected consignments or lots may be reconditioned and resubmitted for re-inspection.
- .6.6 Record all rejections on an approved export compliance record.
- .6.7 Approved Arrangements will use their own similar system and approved export compliance records for recording rejections. All details must be complete and accurate.

## **.7 Reconditioning and re-inspecting**

- .7.1 Ensure the owner or exporter understands they can recondition rejected consignments except:
- when Queensland or Mediterranean fruit fly is found

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- where an importing country specifies that reconditioning is not permitted for any reason.

The type of reconditioning is at the owner's or exporter's discretion; however the method chosen must address the quarantine risk and pest biology. The department will not stipulate any treatment unless it is required by an importing country.

Ensure reconditioned consignments are re-presented for phytosanitary inspection and details of the goods are provided in writing. Ensure details of goods being resubmitted are included and the corrective measures taken to ensure they meet export requirements.

## **.8 Reporting, administration and documentation**

- .8.1 Complete an approved export compliance record, for each inspection, and sign off.
- .8.2 Provide client a copy of the completed Export Compliance Record.
- .8.3 Forward the department all completed approved export compliance records for completing the Phytosanitary Certificate and any supporting documentation.
- .8.4 Retain original completed Export Compliance Record and any supporting documentation for a minimum of 2 years for auditing purposes.

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