



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Question and Answer Guide on Seed exports to the European Union (EU) and movements to Northern Ireland (NI) - reduced requirement for systematic lab testing in GB

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What seed qualify for reduced systematic sampling?

Qualifying seed consignments must:

- Have the whole seed lot presented to the inspector to make sure a representative sample can be taken for the visual inspection.
- Where possible seed must be of a species which has a minimum ISTA weight of 60g and above.
- not be subject to any special import requirements listed in Annex VII or X of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#) or emergency measures
- not have any associated regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQPs) listed in Annex IV or V of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#)
- not be host to any Union Quarantine Pests listed in Annex II of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#) that are present in GB

What is meant by ‘special requirements’?

Certain seed species need to meet specific conditions termed ‘special requirements’ in legislation. These often also result in the need to cite extra statements on accompanying phytosanitary certificates known as additional declarations (ADs), when they are exported from GB to another country.

For exports to the EU, most of the special requirements can be found in Annex IV, V, VII and X of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) [2019/2072](#). Seeds may also have further special requirements related to the implementation of so-called emergency measures, these can be found on the EU’s website.

If the seed you are exporting is not subject to any special requirements then it is eligible for a visual based inspection to determine if a phytosanitary certificate can be issued, which saves time over laboratory analysis. This applies to the majority of seed exported to the EU or moved to NI.

Does seed still need to be sampled for ISTA and OECD purposes?

Yes, the process above only pertains to the phytosanitary status of a consignment. If your seed is subject to other controls that need to be met prior to export, then samples still need to be taken by the plant health and seed inspector (PHSI) or ISTA accredited seed sampler.

Will an inspector still take samples of my seed if they conduct a visually based inspection?

The PHSI may still take samples when conducting the visually based examination if there are signs of evidence of suspect pests and disease which require identification.

For exports to the EU, does my seed need to be free of Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests (RNQPs)?

Yes, except where tolerances apply. Where RNQPs are listed then an onsite visual examination will not be possible and a sample will have to be sent to the Fera laboratory.

Will a phytosanitary certificate be issued by inspectors on site?

If the consignment meets the import requirements of the destination country, then an inspector may be able to issue a phytosanitary certificate onsite, or post the original certificate to the exporter by Royal Mail. This can be done in liaison with the exporter to ensure, where warranted that the phytosanitary certificate is not issued before the ISTA results are received.

What do I do if my seeds are subject to special requirements?

If your seeds are subject to EU special import requirements then a representative sample of the seed will need to be taken by the PHSI. This will be sent to Fera to determine that it is free from quarantine pests and diseases, and where applicable, RNQPs.

Do I still need to provide 7 days advanced notification of my intent to export via the export IT system?

Yes, the seven days pre-notification effectively allows you to book an inspection with the PHSI. This enables PHSI to manage their export applications. You will need to liaise with your local PHSI to arrange the inspection. The 7-day notice is to allow APHA to ensure that an inspection can occur, and that the import requirements can be met so that a phytosanitary certificate can be issued.