



Top 10 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Date published: 12/03/2021

Key:

- **New Questions**
- **Updated Questions**

1. NEW: Do I need a phytosanitary certificate to export dried tea and herbal infusions to the European Union (EU) and Northern Ireland (NI)?

It is the UK's interpretation of the EU's current third-country import requirements that phytosanitary certificates are not required for plant products that have been processed such that they no longer pose a biosecurity risk. We have had confirmation from the EU Commission that the UK's interpretation of the EU third country import requirements is correct, and no phytosanitary certificate is needed for these goods.

2. NEW: Can I still export potatoes to the EU and NI?

The EU has agreed to lift the third country prohibition on ware potatoes being exported from the UK, which means that ware potatoes can be exported from GB to the EU and moved to NI, provided they are accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. However, the European Commission has not yet progressed our case for seed potato equivalence. Defra continues to raise this issue with the EU commission, and we are currently considering next steps.

3. New: Are organic products covered by the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS)?

Defra has announced that traders moving **organic** products from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI) are now eligible for financial support, following the expansion of the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS).

MAS means traders do not need to pay certain certification costs for moving agri-food products from GB to NI. The costs incurred by products being inspected and certified by a certifying officer, now including organic control bodies, are being reimbursed by the Government up to a set amount.

More information is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

4. NEW: Does used agricultural and forestry machinery require a phytosanitary certificate for export to the EU and NI?

GB>EU: Used agricultural and forestry machinery is required to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate in line with EU import requirements. All used machinery must be thoroughly washed down so that it is visually free of soil and plant debris before shipping and stored and carried in a manner that precludes recontamination. Further guidance on exporting used agricultural machinery can be found on the [Plant Health Portal](#).

GB>NI: Traders can move used agricultural and forestry machinery **without the need for a phytosanitary certificate**, providing the machinery is thoroughly cleaned before shipping to ensure it is free from excessive soil and plant debris. These arrangements are temporary, practical steps to address specific and significant practical burdens, and we will continue to work closely with the EU on how we can develop appropriate, risk-based arrangements for the long-term. Further guidance is available [here](#).

5. **NEW: Why do importers need to add a comma-separated values (CSV) file into the PEACH pre-notification? And what level of detail is needed for this?**

Identifying plants to species level is important, for risk assessment and management purposes (i.e. some pests are specific to particular plant species) and is also needed to determine inspection frequency and intensity. This information needs to be in an accessible form and a CSV file facilitates this.

As a temporary easement it will be acceptable for trade to complete CSV files with genus-level information only, other than those high priority goods where species are referred to for biosecurity purposes which must continue to be listed in the CSV file to species-level. This includes all plants for planting species and seed identified to species level and listed in the second column of the [Import Priorities](#) document i.e. prescribed *Xylella* and *Bemisia tabaci* (Bt) hosts, *Acer palmatum* etc.

6. **NEW: What assistance is the UK Government offering to traders who are exporting plants and plant products to NI?**

The Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS)

The UK Government announced the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS) on 16 December 2020 which has been introduced to support and assist traders moving agri-food and similar goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland since 1 Jan 2021. MAS provides traders with assistance with understanding the new regulations for moving goods from GB to NI as well as reimbursing some of the direct certification costs that would be incurred by traders for agri-food commodities under the new requirements. Further guidance on the Movement Assistance Scheme can be found at [gov.uk](#).

The Authorised Trader Scheme (ATS)

There is currently an arrangement in place allowing [authorised traders](#), such as supermarkets and their trusted suppliers, to move some goods from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI) without the need for official certification. This was due to end on 1 April 2021 but has now be extended until 30 September 2021, from which point normal certification requirements will be phased in over a period of time.

Supermarkets and their suppliers will benefit from an additional six-month period in which they do not need to complete health certificate paperwork for agri-food produce. There will be a review of the arrangements in advance of that point, with further guidance to be published on the phased introduction of certification.

If you're moving plants or plant products from GB to NI, you do not need official certification, such as Phytosanitary Certificates (PCs) or marketing standards certification. More information is available on [gov.uk](#).

The Plant Health Exports Audited Trader Scheme (PHEATS)

PHEATS is a trade facilitation scheme for the exports of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers to the EU and NI. Wherein, PHEATS members are able to complete their own inspections and apply for phytosanitary

certificates to be issued. Only these goods, excluding ware potatoes, are eligible for this scheme. For more information and to find out how to apply and register for the scheme, please see the [Plant Health Portal](#).

7. NEW: Why are you allowing UK plant passports to be attached in the EU? Doesn't this disadvantage domestic growers?

This allowance extends only to the act of attaching a UK Plant Passport; EU operators are not authorised to issue UK Plant Passports. Meaning that it is the GB operator who is responsible for the First Place of Destination of the relevant consignment who must be authorised to issue those plant passports and is audited under the plant passport regime. Therefore, a GB operator who is importing plants from the EU with UK plant passports already attached, is subject to the same fees associated with the passport regime as an operator who grows plants in GB. Non-compliances on UK plant passports attached to imported plants are the responsibility of the relevant authorised GB operator and may prevent plants from being able to move on from the First Place of Destination.

Please note, we have extended the period in which UK Plant Passports can be attached in EU member states until 30 June 2022.

8. NEW: Have any changes been made to the import Special Requirements noted in [The Plant Health \(Phytosanitary Conditions\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#) where these are not achievable?

The UK National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) is currently reviewing the import requirements for a small number of plants and plant products in respect of some specific pests and diseases. The special requirements apply immediately and affect imports of a number of plants and plant products. The guidance titled [updated GB special requirements for imports of plants and plant products](#) can be found on the [Plant Health Portal](#) and is updated frequently.

9. NEW: Do GB exporters need to register on TRACES NT to export to the EU/NI?

For exports to the EU or movements to NI, business should continue to register on eDomero to apply for phytosanitary certificates. Further information on how to register for eDomero can be found on [gov.uk](#) and the Plant Health Portal. GB exporters are not required to register on the EU's TRACES NT platform and will be unable to submit pre-notifications on this system. Pre-notifications on TRACES NT can only be submitted by importers or operators based in the EU or NI.

10. NEW: What are the rules for wood packaging material (WPM) used to transport goods between the UK-EU?

Since 1 January 2021, all WPM moving between GB and the EU, and from GB to NI, must be treated and appropriately marked in compliance with international standards (ISPM 15).

For further guidance a [WPM Q&A](#) can be found here on the Plant Health Portal, or visit [gov.uk](#).

Previously asked questions:

UPDATED: Can you tell me which plants are more likely to attract an inspection?

Defra have released import guidance on the [New EU to GB Import Guidance page](#) available on the [Plant Health Portal](#). The guidance named [Reduced Physical Check Regime](#) and [Risk Hierarchy for EU import- Plants](#)

identifies the frequency of checks for High-Priority plants and plant products from EU third countries and non-EU third countries.

Are CC trolley shelves exempt from requiring an ISPM 15 stamp?

Yes, wood components permanently attached to freight vehicles and containers are generally regarded as being of low risk and are exempt from ISPM 15 requirements. This exemption extends to the shelves of CC trolleys. A WPM specific Q&A can be found [here](#).

UPDATED: If I have a delivery to more than one of my premises, can they be imported under one phytosanitary certificate? If so, how do I show that on my PEACH notification?

Defra has released updated [Multi-drop guidance](#) available on the [Plant Health Portal](#). This guidance outlines the various drop, or multi-drop scenarios many businesses operate under.

The update addresses the traceability requirements for the PEACH application number covering the consignment, and/or the Phytosanitary Certificate number to be included on the delivery note for deliveries to multiple Places of Destination (PoDs).

Additionally, for Scenario's 4 and 5 in the multi-drop guidance, a phytosanitary certificate, once issued by the exporting country, is valid for 14 days, meaning all parts of the consignment forming the multidrop must have arrived in GB within 14 days of the PC being issued.

For further guidance, including Plant Passporting requirements for onward movement, please visit the [Multi-drop guidance](#) on the [Plant Health Portal](#).

When the plants arrive and some of them have been chosen for an inspection does the whole load have to be quarantined?

The composition of the consignment must be maintained until an inspector contacts you and indicates if the entirety of the consignment needs to be made available for inspection or if they only need access to certain elements of the consignment.

UPDATED: Can you tell me what is happening with compost? (meaning what do I need to do to import it or export it)

Exports, GB>EU/NI

As a commodity: Now the Transition Period has ended, GB exports to the EU and NI are subject to the EU's third country import requirements, including the existing prohibitions on soil and growing media as a commodity. Therefore, you **cannot** export soil or growing medium to the EU or NI as a commodity.

Defra are continuing to engage with the EU commission to lift plant health prohibitions, including those on soil and growing media as a commodity, and to develop helpful practical arrangements for businesses trading with the EU and Northern Ireland.

Attached to plants: It is **permissible** for soil and growing media attached to plants to be exported to EU if the growing media meets the EU's import requirements. For further guidance on exports of growing media, and how to fulfil the EU's import requirements please visit the [Plant Health Portal](#).

NEW: Attached to plants GB>NI ONLY: it is **permissible** for plants and plant products that have been grown in soil and still have growing media attached to them to be moved to NI with a phytosanitary certificate, provided the authorised operator meets GB plant passporting requirements.

Imports, EU>GB

As a commodity: Soil and growing media as a commodity **can** continue to be imported into GB from the EU, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein. From 1 January 2021 imports of soil and growing media as a commodity from these countries **do not** require a phytosanitary certificate or pre-notification.

Attached to plants: For soil and growing media attached to plants from the EU, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein, there are **no special import requirements** that must be met to be imported into GB.

However, from 1 January 2021 the plants associated with the growing medium are required to have a phytosanitary certificate and pre-notification via PEACH. For further guidance on the import requirements for plants and plant products from the EU to GB please visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Is it true that I can't send any acer or oak trees to the island of Ireland?

Yes, EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules apply in Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Protocol, upholding the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit. The EU prohibits the import of high-risk plants for planting, other than seeds, in vitro material and naturally or artificially dwarfed woody plants for planting, of *Acer L.* and *Quercus L.* in accordance with Commission Implementing [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/2019](#).

UPDATED: Why can't I send my plants to customers in Northern Ireland if I've grown them in a bark-based peat-free compost?

The UK Government announced on 4 March 2021 the latest pragmatic arrangements for the movement of growing media, as well as used agricultural and forestry machinery from GB to Northern Ireland (NI). These temporary operational measures have been introduced to address certain specific practical issues that have emerged, without compromising biosecurity on the island of Ireland, while discussions continue on appropriate, risk-based long-term arrangements.

Within these arrangements, plants and plant products that have been grown in soil and still have growing media attached to them can be moved to NI with a phytosanitary certificate, provided the authorised operator meets GB plant passporting requirements for growing media. Further guidance and a short Q&A on these arrangements can be found on the [Plant Health Portal](#).

My Dutch supplier has insisted I give their agent authority to act as the importer on my behalf. I've already appointed a customs agent who is doing my PEACH notifications on my behalf. Can my supplier do this?

We have provided guidance on UK professional operator registration, including the use of a UK based 'proxy' customs agent, as part of plant health import requirements. Defra cannot advise on what customs agent services an importer should use, only that the arrangement meets the professional operator requirements. Guidance can be found [here](#).

I have Northern Ireland customers purchasing from my UK company, will they need to be registered on the TRACES NT system?

Yes. When exporting GB goods to the EU or NI the importer and the importers agent will need to register on TRACESNT in order to pre-notify the import to the relevant competent authority.

How do we supply to Northern Ireland if the systems aren't ready for 1st January, and what do I do if I can't get a PHSI to sign off my delivery in time?

The current IT system, eDomero, is to be used to submit applications for export phytosanitary certificates until you are directed to migrate to a new service in Spring 2021. We are confident eDomero can withstand the volume and capacity of new users from 1 January 2021.

APHA and Fera have undertaken significant recruitment to increase the number of plant health inspectors and diagnosticians in order to support export and import inspections. We have sufficient resource to meet demand since 1 January 2021 and have ensured minimal disruption to trade.

In order to ensure your business receives the PC on the date requested you will need to provide 7 working days' notice in advance of the export. Allowing time for the inspectors to visit, inspect, and take samples if required for lab testing and to issue the phytosanitary certificate. Without the PC the goods will not be able to be exported.

APHA are currently reviewing their service level agreement (SLA) surrounding the 7 days' notice period to ensure that export checks and certification are issued in line with the needs of trade.