



Regulatory Alerts & Updates

Regulatory Alert: APHIS Original Phytosanitary Certificate and Forms Required Effective April 1, 2022

February 7, 2022

WHAT IS THIS APHIS DATE CHANGE ABOUT?

In response to the unprecedented challenges facing the trade from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) allowed importers of plant commodities to upload *copies* of phytosanitary certificates and forms. However, effective April 1, 2022, APHIS and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will accept only *original* phytosanitary certificates and forms for plant commodities. The initial effective date of January 1, 2022 was extended due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the trade. The APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program and CBP will continue to accept digital exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates through the ePhyto system—a government-to-government sharing of electronic phytosanitary certificates.

The APHIS Core message set supports the transmission of ePhytos. A paper certificate would not need to be presented for cargo clearance by U.S. officials if the certificate is an ePhyto with a proper declaration in the APHIS Core message set using the PG13/14 code AE1.

Here is the current list of participating ePhyto countries:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/sa_export/ephyto-participating-countries .

Phytosanitary certificates accepted by APHIS include:

- Certificates created through a participating country's ePhyto system, or signed paper forms.
- Acceptable foreign site certificates of inspection and/or treatment include signed paper forms, signed copies of the master PPQ Form 203, and digitally signed electronic PPQ Form 203s.

Customers who ship APHIS controlled plant products are encouraged to routinely check the APHIS website for any updates: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth> .

Q & A

Q 1: Is FedEx Express able to accept plants and plant materials for international movement and clearance in the United States?

A 1: Plants and plant materials are prohibited on FedEx Express International Express services. FedEx Express is unable to clear the plants on any express service. Customers can transport plants and plant materials on FedEx Express deferred services such as Airport to Airport or International Premium but must identify a broker to handle the clearance of the plant into the United States.

Q 2: So foreign shippers are no longer required to include a paper copy of the original phytosanitary certificate with the shipment beginning April 1, 2022?

A 2: APHIS recommends that during the initial transition period, shippers should still include a copy of their ePhyts with the shipment documents where applicable as a failsafe measure. This will help protect against possible transmission issues that could occur during the first few months as the ePhyto system is utilized.

Q 3: Can a U.S. trading partner that is marked “YES” on the ePhyto site not provide the ePhyto message?

A 3: Yes, this could occur due to limitations with the country’s system, outages, or other reasons.

Q 4: How can an importer contact APHIS personnel on plant or plant product imports into the US?

A 4: Customers can email plantproducts.permits@usda.gov or call 1-877-770-5990.

REFERENCES

APHIS announcement of new effective date -

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2021/sa-12/unoriginal-phyto-certs

CBP CSMS #50564724 on the APHIS March 31, 2022 end date -

https://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/USDHSCBP-3038e74?wgt_ref=USDHSCBP_WIDGET_2

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