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# CERTIFICATION OF AREA OR PROPERTY FREEDOM BASED ON MONITORING BY THE ACCREDITING AUTHORITY

## REVISION REGISTER

Revision No	Date of Change	Amendment Details
1	17/09/2003	All pages
2	22/12/2003	Pages 8, 16, 17, 18 and 19.
3	22/10/2009	All Pages
4	27/06/2017	Changes made to align with the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> . Updated definitions, removed details for accreditation, auditing procedures, sanctions policy and charging, and replaced the application form and PHAC. Updated NSW Department of Primary Industries contact details.

**Authorised by:** Manager, Plant Product Integrity & Standards

**Date:** 27 June 2017

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## 1. PURPOSE

This procedure describes the intrastate or interstate movement of produce certified under an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangement for freedom in an area or property from a pest or disease, based on monitoring by the accrediting authority for the pest.

## 2. SCOPE

This operational procedure covers all certification of area and property freedom based on monitoring by the Accrediting Authority issued by Businesses operating under an ICA arrangement in New South Wales.

- Certification of area or property freedom under this Operational Procedure may not fulfil all quarantine entry conditions for all produce to all intrastate and interstate markets.
- Some intrastate and interstate markets may require additional quarantine certification for requirements other than area/property freedom.
- It is the responsibility of the Business consigning the produce to ensure compliance with all applicable quarantine requirements.
- Information on intrastate and interstate quarantine requirements can be obtained by phoning 1800 084 881 or accessing <http://www.interstatequarantine.org.au/>.

## 3. REFERENCES

Biosecurity Act 2015

Further information – [Biosecurity Act 2015](#)

Further information – <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/ica>

Policies – <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact/procedures>

Accreditation of Biosecurity Certifiers

Biosecurity Audit Frequency

Work Instruction – <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/ica>

WI-01 – ‘Guidelines for Completion of Plant Health Assurance Certificates’

WI-07

Source property accreditation under ICA-23

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

<i>Act</i>	means the <a href="#">Biosecurity Act 2015</a> .
<i>Accredited source property</i>	means a source property with current area/property freedom accreditation granted by an Authorised Person.
<i>Application for Area or Property Freedom</i>	means an application for accreditation of a source property for an Area or Property Freedom quarantine requirement.
<i>Area/property freedom quarantine requirement</i>	means a quarantine requirement applying to intra or interstate movement that requires produce to be sourced from properties that are in an area which is free or a specified distance from a known outbreak of a specified pest or disease, or sourced from properties that are inspected and found free from a specified pest or disease.
<i>Authorised Person</i>	means an authorised officer under the Act or a person authorised under a law of another State or Territory that relates to plant biosecurity.
<i>Authorised Signatory</i>	means a person whose name is notified to the Secretary as a person who can issue a biosecurity certificate on behalf of the Business.
<i>Business</i>	means the legal entity accredited as a biosecurity certifier under the Act.
<i>Certification Assurance</i>	means a voluntary arrangement between the Department and a Business that demonstrates effective in-house quality management and provides assurance through documented procedures and records that produce meets the specified requirements
<i>Certification Assurance Arrangement</i>	means a Certification Assurance Arrangement that enables a Business or a person authorised under a corresponding law of a State or Territory, to issue a Plant Health Assurance Certificate that meets certain plant health quarantine conditions for trade within the State or between the State and other States and Territories.
<i>certified/certification</i>	means covered by a valid Plant Health Assurance Certificate.
<i>Consignment</i>	means a discrete quantity of packages or a bulk load of fruit consigned to one Business at one location at one time.
<i>Department</i>	means the NSW Department of Industry – Office of Primary Industries.
<i>facility</i>	means the location of the operation covered by the ICA arrangement.
<i>ICA Scheme</i>	means a scheme developed by the States and Territories to meet their respective plant quarantine requirements under the Memorandum of Understanding on Interstate Certification Assurance dated 6 August 1999.
<i>Non-conformance</i>	means a non-fulfilment of a specified requirement.

<i>package</i>	means the final outer covering in which certified produce is consigned and may include a box, carton, bin, bundle or other packaging unit.
<i>PHAC</i>	means a Plant Health Assurance Certificate that is issued in accordance with the requirements of a Certification Assurance Arrangement.
<i>Source property</i>	means a property on which produce is grown or packed for certification under this Operational Procedure.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITY

These position titles have been used to reflect the responsibilities of staff under the ICA arrangement. These positions may not be present in all Businesses, or different titles may be used for staff who carry out these responsibilities. In some Businesses one person may carry out the responsibilities of more than one position.

The **Certification Controller** is responsible for:

- representing the Business during audits and other matters relevant to ICA accreditation;
- ensuring the Business has current accreditation for an ICA arrangement under this Operational Procedure
- training staff in their duties and responsibilities under this Operational Procedure;
- ensuring the Business and its staff comply with their responsibilities and duties under this Operational Procedure;
- ensuring the Business has current area/property freedom accreditation for each property owned or managed by the Business on which certified produce is grown, handled, stored, packed or dispatched for certification under the ICA arrangement (see 7.1 Area/Property Freedom Accreditation); and
- ensuring all certification of produce under the Businesses ICA arrangement is carried out in accordance with this Operational Procedure.

The **Product Controller** is responsible for:

- ensuring all produce received for packing and certification under the ICA arrangement is sourced from accredited source properties with current accreditation (see 7.3 Sourcing Produce for Area/Property freedom Certification);
- maintaining area/property freedom certification records (see 7.5 Record of Receipt); and
- ensuring all produce intended for certification under the ICA arrangement is clearly identified and segregated from other produce from non-accredited properties and the identity of the produce and its accredited source property is maintained from receipt through to dispatch (see 7.7 Storage, Handling & Security of Certified Produce).

The **Authorised Dispatcher** is responsible for:

- ensuring all packages covered by a PHAC issued by the Business under this Operational Procedure are identified (see 7.7.1 Produce Identification);
- ensuring certified produce is stored and transported in secure conditions which prevents cross-infestation by uncertified produce (see 7.7.5 Post Certification Security); and
- maintaining copies of all PHACs issued by the Business under the ICA arrangement (see 7.8 ICA System Records).

**Authorised Signatories** are responsible for:

- verifying that all the produce in a consignment has been sourced from accredited source properties with current accreditation for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement being certified (see 7.4 Certification of Area/Property Freedom); and
- ensuring, prior to signing and issuing a PHAC, that produce covered by the certificate has been prepared in accordance with the Businesses ICA arrangement, and the details on the certificate are true and correct in every particular (see 7.7.2 Plant Health Assurance Certificates).

## 6. REQUIREMENTS

Produce certified under this Operational Procedure must be grown and packed on properties with current area and/or property freedom accreditation for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement specified on the PHAC.

## 7. PROCEDURE

### 7.1 Area/Property Freedom Accreditation

All source properties, including properties on which produce is grown, stored, handled, packed, certified and dispatched, must be accredited for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement specified on the PHAC issued by a Business accredited under this Operational Procedure.

### 7.2 Moving Produce Between Accredited Source Properties

Produce that is moved between accredited source properties, through an area or another property that is not free of the specified pest for which area/property freedom has been granted, shall be transported under secure conditions which prevents infestation by that pest (see 7.7.5 Post Certification Security).

### 7.3 Sourcing Produce for Area/Property Freedom Certification

The Product Controller shall ensure that all produce received for certification under this Operational Procedure is from an accredited source property with current area/property freedom accreditation for the quarantine requirement to be certified.

The Product Controller must obtain and file a copy of the Application for Area/Property Freedom prior to the Business sourcing produce for certification under the arrangement. They must check the current status of the property by referring to the period of approval and the quarantine requirement/s covered.

#### 7.3.1 *Receival of Produce Grown by Another Business*

A Business that certifies produce from a property owned or managed by another accredited Business shall ensure:

- (a) each delivery of produce supplied for certification under this Operational Procedure is verified for current Area or Property Freedom by checking the Application for Area or Property Freedom of the source property (see Attachment 4);
- (b) a Record of Receipt is maintained for all receivals of produce (see Attachment 1);
- (c) where applicable, the produce has been transported under secure conditions; and

- (d) the identification of the produce and any supporting documentation is maintained from receipt through to certification and dispatch.
- (e)

#### 7.4 Certification of Area/Property Freedom

Prior to certifying area/property freedom under this Operational Procedure, the Authorised Signatory signing the certificate shall verify that all the produce in the consignment has been sourced from accredited source properties with current accreditation for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement being certified.

Verification shall involve sighting the current endorsed application for Area/Property Freedom covering the accredited source property and the area/property freedom quarantine requirement being certified.

Information on intrastate and interstate quarantine requirements can be obtained by phoning 1800 084 881 or accessing <http://www.interstatequarantine.org.au/>.

#### 7.5 Record of Receipt

The Product Controller must ensure a record is kept of all receipts of produce to be certified for area/property freedom certification using a Record of Receipt (see Attachment 1) or records which record the same information.

The Businesses Record of receipt shall include:

- the PHAC number;
- the date of receipt;
- the produce type and quantity of produce covered by the certificate;
- the accredited source property's Accredited Property (AP) number;
- the area/property freedom code or codes for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement(s) specified on the PHAC; and
- the name and signature of the Authorised Signatory issuing the PHAC.

The name and signature of the Authorised Signatory issuing the PHAC shall be evidence that the necessary verification of area/property freedom specified in 7.4 Certification of Area/Property Freedom.

An example of a completed Record of Receipt is included as Attachment 2.

#### 7.6 Storage, Handling & Security of Certified Produce

Produce intended for certification under this Operational Procedure must be handled and stored in conditions which maintains the identification of the produce and its accredited source property and prevents mixing of conforming and nonconforming produce.

#### 7.7 Dispatch

##### 7.7.1 Produce Identification

Prior to the issuance of a PHAC by the Business under this Operational Procedure the Authorised Dispatcher must ensure that each package of certified produce is marked in indelible and legible characters of at least 5mm with:

- the Interstate Produce (IP) number of the accredited Business certifying the produce under this Operational Procedure;
- the words “**MEETS ICA-23**”; and
- date (or date code) on which the produce was packed.

A package is the final outer covering in which certified produce is consigned and may include a box, carton, bin, bundle or other packaging unit.

Produce that has not been verified as conforming to the area/property freedom requirements specified in this Operational Procedure shall not be marked as stated above.

### **7.7.2 Plant Health Assurance Certificates**

The Authorised Dispatcher shall ensure a PHAC is completed and signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Business prior to dispatch of the consignment of produce to a market requiring certification for the area/property freedom quarantine requirement covered by the PHAC.

Assurance Certificates shall be in the form of a PHAC. PHACs shall include:

- (a) in the “Accredited Business that Prepared the Produce” section:
  - the name and address of the accredited Business certifying the produce;
- (a) in the “IP Number of Accredited Business” section:
  - the IP Number of the accredited Business certifying the produce;
- (a) in the “Grower or Packer” section:
  - the name and address of the accredited Business that owns or manages the accredited source property on which the produce was grown. Where the produce in the consignment was grown by a number of accredited Businesses, the word “VARIOUS” shall be used;
- (a) in the “Type of Produce” section:
  - the type and quantity of produce in the consignment;

**NOTE:** Where there is insufficient room to list each produce type, the words “See Attachment” are to be used and an Attachment Sheet securely attached to each copy of the PHAC.

The Attachment Sheet must include:

- the words “ATTACHMENT SHEET”;
  - the name and address of the consignor;
  - the PHAC number;
  - the number and type of packages in the consignment and the type of produce in the package;
  - the signature of the Authorised Signatory that signed the PHAC and the date.
- (a) in the “**Additional Certification**” section:



- the applicable area/property freedom code(s) **or** the specified area/property freedom quarantine requirement(s) for the market to which the produce is consigned and for which all the accredited source property/ies are currently accredited.

Individual PHACs shall be issued to cover each consignment (i.e. a discrete quantity of produce to a single consignee at the one time) to avoid splitting of consignments. A PHAC may be issued to cover a consignment that is made up of produce sourced from a number of accredited source properties provided the certification given is applicable to all the produce in the consignment.

PHACs shall be completed, issued and distributed in accordance with the Work Instruction WI-01 'Guidelines for Completion of Plant Health Assurance Certificates'.

Books of pre-printed PHACs are available from ICA Records Management, Department of Primary Industries, phone 02 6552 3000.

Upon suspension, cancellation or withdrawal of accreditation, the PHAC book must be immediately returned to the Department.

### **7.7.3 Other Certification**

The Authorised Dispatcher should check whether any other quarantine requirements (e.g. a treatment or condition) apply to the produce and market they are consigning the produce to prior to preparing a PHAC for the consignment.

If any other plant health certification is required and can be certified under another ICA arrangement operated by the certifying Business, then this may be included on the PHAC.

Alternatively, the Department should be contacted to gain any other certification required.

### **7.7.4 Plant Health Assurance Certificate Distribution**

The **original** (yellow copy) must accompany the consignment.

The **duplicate** (white copy) must be retained by the accredited Business.

### **7.7.5 Post Certification Security**

Certified produce must be transported under secure conditions, which prevents cross-infestation by uncertified produce.

Produce that has been certified as grown and packed in area free of fruit fly that is being transported through outbreak areas or areas that are not declared free from fruit fly must be transported under secure conditions.

Secure conditions for fruit fly include:

- (a) unvented packages;
- (b) vented packages with the vents secured with gauze/mesh with a maximum aperture of 1.6 mm;
- (c) fully enclosed under tarpaulins, hessian, shade cloth, mesh or other covering which provides a maximum aperture of 1.6 mm;
- (d) shrink wrapped and sealed as a palletised unit; and

- (e) fully enclosed or screened buildings, cold rooms, vehicles or other facilities free from gaps or other entry points greater than 1.6 mm.

*Fruit consigned to Tasmania must be transported in full container lots sealed prior to transport, or as lesser container lots in accordance with the requirements of (a), (b) or (d) above.*

*Where consignments are transported to Tasmania as full container lots, the seal number must be included in the Brand Name or Identifying Marks section of the PHAC covering the consignment.*

*Where consignments are transported in vented packages that are sealed as a palletised unit in accordance with (d) above, the Business must secure the top layer of the pallet by applying a row of tape over the shrink wrap and have applied to the tape in waterproof ink the signature of an Authorised Signatory, the number of the PHAC covering the consignment and the date.*

## 7.8 ICA System Records

The Business shall maintain the following records:

- (a) copies of all Applications for Area or Property Freedom for source properties (see 7.3 Sourcing Produce for Area/Property Freedom Certification);
- (b) the Record of Receipt (see 7.5 Record of Receipt); and
- (c) the duplicate copy of each PHAC issued by the Business (see 7.3 Sourcing Produce for Area/Property Freedom Certification).

Records must be retained for 4 years from completion.

ICA system records shall be made available when requested by an Authorised Person.

## 7.9 ICA System Documentation

The Business shall maintain the following documentation:

- (a) a current copy of this Operational Procedure; and
- (b) a current Certificate of Accreditation for an ICA Arrangement.

ICA system documentation shall be made available on request by an Authorised Person.

## 8. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Record of Receipt	Blank
Attachment 2	Record of Receipt	Completed Example
Attachment 3	Application for Accreditation as a Biosecurity Certifier	
Attachment 4	Application for Area or Property Freedom	



# Record of Receipt

Business Name:				Interstate Produce (IP) No. <b>N</b>				Record No.:			
PHAC Number(s)	Date of Receipt	Produce Type	Quantity	Accredited Property (AP) No.	Area/Property Freedom Code(s)	Name of Product Controller		Signature of Product Controller			



# Record of Receipt

<b>Business Name: <span style="color: blue;">Finest Fruit Company</span></b>				Interstate Produce (IP) No. <b>N 0 0 0 4</b>					Record No.: <b>06</b>
PHAC Number(s)	Date of Receipt	Produce Type	Quantity	Accredited Property (AP) No.	Area/Property Freedom Code(s)	Name of Product Controller	Signature of Product Controller		
9999999	4/4/09	Navels	10 Bins	AP0005-01	QFF-01	Sarah Clarke	Sarah Clarke		
9998888	5/4/09	Navels	90 Boxes	AP0004-02	QFF-01	Sarah Clarke	Sarah Clarke		
9999999	5/4/09	Eureka Lemons	50 Boxes	AP0005-01	QFF-01	Sarah Clarke	Sarah Clarke		
9999999	5/4/09	Navels	80 Boxes	AP0005-01	QFF-01	Sarah Clarke	Sarah Clarke		

## **Application for accreditation as a Biosecurity Certifier**

A business seeking to become accredited or renew accreditation for an ICA or CA arrangement must complete and lodge an application for accreditation using the prescribed form and paying the application fee.

The application form can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/ica> under the heading [Resources](#)

Alternatively, contact ICA Records Management:

Phone: 02 6552 3000

Fax: 02 6552 7239

Email: [ica.scheme@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ica.scheme@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## **Application for Area Freedom Biosecurity Certificate**

A business requiring certification for area or property freedom must complete and lodge an application using the prescribed form and paying the application fee.

The application form can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact>