

Sending product to Australia is likely to become more difficult over the next few years.



What you should be aware of!



Background

Australia is phasing out the OPI¹ programme where New Zealand fruit and vegetables can be precleared in New Zealand before export.

Within three years OPI will no longer exist and the Compliance Based Inspection Scheme (CBIS) will provide one way of moving produce into Australia. Under CBIS the inspections will take place at the Australian border and the scheme rewards importers with a good compliance history. Good compliance results in decreased inspection rates and faster entry. CBIS details are available on the:

- PMAC web site at <http://www.pmac.co.nz/node/1737>
- DAWR² web site - <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/plant-products/risk-return>

From September 2017 NZ exporters have had the option to send avocados to Australia via CBIS. Under this scheme an importer must have 10 consecutive passes before the inspection rate decreases to 50% of consignments. As of December 70% of the Avocado consignments sent under CBIS have been stopped at the Australian border for some reason.

MPI and Industry members on PMAC have formed a working group to work with both the New Zealand Industry and Australian officials to facilitate a smooth transition to CBIS.

To prepare for CBIS the working group are advising that

1. Sectors, their growers and packers increase efforts to produce compliant exports.

Our experience over the last 6 months is that many NZ consignments are being stopped. The primary reasons are

- insect pests or weed seeds;
- contamination with plant material or soil, and/ or,
- having incorrect documentation.

Under CBIS such issues mostly result in the consignment being fumigated. This has quality impacts, costs money and delays access.

High interception rates will also give New Zealand product a bad reputation and result not only in every consignment being inspected but also border inspectors becoming more thorough thereby increasing the chance of a find.

¹ Offshore Pre-shipment Inspection programme

² Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

The working group recommends you review your supply chain to see what can be done to improve compliance. Note that even the presence of non-quarantine pests will result in a “fail” as an intervention is required to identify the pest and determine its status. All pest finds at the border are assumed to be a pest until shown otherwise.

Industry are also encouraged to have a closer look at their phytosanitary inspection records to determine which actionable and non-actionable pests may be present and for which a suitable control can be readily implemented. Streamlining your supply chain to reduce pests and other issues that result in interventions at the border will pay dividends.

If your commodity is not yet being sent via CBIS – look now to see whether there are enhancements required. DAWR are very interested in including products into CBIS that as a result of improvements in the supply chain can demonstrate improved compliance. DAWR prefer products for inclusion in CBIS that have ‘simpler’ supply chain pathways. By this they mean there are fewer options in the pathway for them to account for e.g. fumigated vs non-fumigated.

2. Collect data to inform MPI’s discussion with Australia

Ensuring conversations between officials are based on fact rather than perception maximises the chance that these conversations will result in useful initiatives. You can help MPI by providing statistics on:

- Consignment success or failure,
- Non-actionable pests, particularly those that are hard to distinguish from quarantine pests,
- Transaction times at the border (e.g. how long consignments are held before inspections etc), and,
- Any other issues that commonly arise or cause frustration.

Please collate this information for your exports and provide it to your Sector body. A template has been provided by MPI to sector bodies to record this information.

The working group is aware that often exporters are dependent on their importers for feedback about what happens at the border. Please ask your importers for information on the fate of your consignments and if the reason for any delays is known. To facilitate your importers receiving the information please let your importer (or the importers broker) know that information must be entered into the Australian agriculture import management system (AIMS) in line mode. This will ensure reporting by DAWR to the importer provides adequate detail.

3. Next steps

Over the next 6 months the working group (Industry and MPI) will be meeting monthly to monitor access into Australia. After each meeting an update will be circulated. If you have any specific queries or concerns between these communications please check the websites mentioned above or email plantexports@mpi.govt.nz

