

Addressing problems with phytosanitary certificates

The phytosanitary inspection services of Japan will closely examine your export-related documents used for shipping. Document failures are not accepted. The most effective way to avoid problems is to double check the accuracy and completeness of the documents accompanying the products and goods you are exporting to Japan. Based on Japanese law, the original phytosanitary certificate (no scanned copy) is required in order to proceed with the import inspection. Problems arise when errors are found on the certificate or the document is lost on route to Japan.

In case of problems

If errors are found on a phytosanitary certificate issued for a shipment to Japan, or the original phytosanitary certificate has been lost on route to Japan, the Japanese authorities may instruct the importer or freight forwarder of the shipment to send a replacement certificate issued by the Dutch authorities. In such cases, the Dutch exporter is advised to follow the following procedure.

1. The exporter finds out how and by whom the errors were made, and reports the problem to the General Inspection Body (Nak, KCB, BKD or Naktuinbouw) which is responsible for the issuance of phytosanitary certificates.
2. The exporter makes a request to the General Inspection Body for the issuance of a replacement certificate.
3. The General Inspection Body is appointed by the NVWA to decide whether a replacement certificate will be issued. In special circumstances, the General Inspection Body will issue a replacement certificate in consultation with the NVWA.
4. The **original** replacement certificate should be sent to the Japanese Plant Protection Station at the port of entry.
5. The Plant Protection Station will make a final decision on whether or not the replacement certificate may be accepted.

In the unlikely event the problem remains unresolved after the replacement certificate is submitted to the Plant Protection Station, contact the Agricultural Department of the Netherlands Embassy (Attn. Ms. Yuko Saito, tel. +81 3 5776 5492). Please be aware that the Embassy cannot issue a letter or any other official document on the authenticity of the replacement certificate solely at the request from an exporter or an importer. It is only when the above steps are followed and the problem remains unresolved that the Embassy may issue an official document following direct instructions from the General Inspection Body or the NVWA.

Temporary measure related to the COVID-19 pandemic*

In exceptional cases it is possible for the NVWA, or the General Inspection Body, to email PDF copies of the replacement certificates to the Plant Protection Station of Japan, with the request to process shipments for which the original phytosanitary certificates (paper versions) have been lost. For fruit and vegetables, KCB sends these emails on behalf of the NVWA.

This emergency procedure was created during the Covid-19 pandemic because there were few flights at that time and it took a long time for the original replacement certificates (paper versions) to arrive in Japan. Please note that the Plant Protection Station will accept the PDF copies only if they are emailed **directly** by the NVWA, or the General Inspection Body appointed by the NVWA, to their designated email address. PDF copies emailed via companies will not be considered valid.

Because this is a temporary, emergency measure to deal with disruption in transportation and logistics caused by the pandemic and is not intended as a standard procedure to deal with problems concerning phytosanitary certificates, the Dutch authorities are very careful in applying it. The exporter can request a replacement certificate if a phytosanitary certificate has been lost, but whether a PDF copy of the replacement will be emailed to the Plant Protection Station will be determined on a case-by-case basis after critically assessing the requests from exporters in all relevant sectors.

For further details, please contact the Planning & Control (P&C) of KCB (P&C@kcb.nl) or the NVWA.

* [WTO/SPS notification by Japan \(G/SPS/N/JPN/755\)](#)

[Annex 1: Procedure for temporary measures to accept scanned or hard copies of export certificates for plant health](#)