



FPC PRESS RELEASE

15 December 2009

FPC WELCOMES ALV LAUNCH WITH FULL DELIVERY OF BENEFITS FOR THE INDUSTRY

Long awaited benefits for importers and agents from simplifying procedures for importing fresh produce and cut flowers will be realised when the Automatic Licence Verification (ALV) system is implemented fully on Tuesday 16 February 2010.

“The industry has worked for a long time to have a streamlined process which is estimated to save the industry around £1 million each year,” commented Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC). “We have called for these simplified and improved procedures for over two years and FPC was instrumental in driving forward the initial pilot.”

ALV provides an electronic link between the Fera/RPA ‘Peach’ system and the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) ‘CHIEF’ system³. Consignment release decisions from Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate (HMI) and Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI) Inspectors are transmitted electronically and in real time, directly into CHIEF, removing the need for agents or importers to send Quarantine Release Certificates (QRCs) or Conformity Certificates to the HMRC National Clearance Hub at Salford. This real-time update directly into CHIEF results in the customs clearance times of containers which are subject to HMI or PHSI control being reduced from the current two hours down to 10-15 minutes, once the HMI or PHSI inspection decision has been made.

FPC would like to thank its members who have been involved in the pilot, and who have provided vital feedback through their participation. During the pilot FPC requested that

sufficient resource would be put in place to support traders' enquiries with the gradual incremental increase of traders using ALV.

"We would like to thank the project team, including Fera, for its tremendous effort and support. It is essential that the industry has a fully workable system available before a key period of major activity," commented Nigel Jenney. "We would encourage other companies to get on board with Defra's final briefings early in the New Year so that they are ready to take advantage of the improvements."

This is the final element of a long term strategy bringing together work to develop PEACH, eDomero and CHIEF. Other significant achievements by FPC on behalf of its members have included the introduction of PEACH and revision of the Plant Health legislation and its implementation, and a practical interpretation of the revised EU Marketing Standards, providing significant savings for the industry on an annual basis. FPC continues to challenge the UK Government to remove any unnecessary burdens from companies importing fresh produce to the UK, and to ensure that the UK is a destination of choice, with fast and effective importation controls to allow highly perishable fresh produce and cut flowers to be enjoyed by the nation.

"We are pleased that a number of strategic issues and recommendations where Government departments could make efficiencies which we identified have been taken on board as part of the Government's 'Simplifying Trade Across UK Borders' action plan. We shall continue to work with SITPRO to ensure that the Government fulfils its promise to improve regulation and removes unnecessary business costs," said Nigel Jenney.

For information on ALV visit:

<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/imports/alvs.cfm>

Ends

Notes for editors:

1. The Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC) is the UK's fresh produce trade association and is based in Peterborough. The FPC has represented the fresh produce sector for many years and is recognised across the UK and EU as the voice of the industry.
2. Extensive membership covers the complete spectrum of industry businesses including growers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.

3. The ALV process will cover goods, controlled by HMI (Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate) or PHSI (Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate) imported into England and Wales from third countries outside the European Union and indirect imports of controlled goods sourced from third countries that enter the EU via another member state prior to onward movement to England or Wales to their final destination in the UK.
4. Final briefing sessions will be held on 6 January 2010 and 10 February 2010 at the Premier Inn Heathrow, Hounslow, Middlesex.

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