



FPC PRESS RELEASE

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THANKS A MILLION FPC! AMNESTY AS REVISED PLANT HEALTH IMPORTS PROCEDURES ANNOUNCED

The Fresh Produce Consortium has secured an 'amnesty' worth around one million pounds for companies on charges for plant health imports through the PEACH system. The announcement comes as revised procedures for plant health imports are to be introduced from 18 November 2008.

"After months of turmoil and indecision it's great that we have reached a position where we can move forward as an industry," commented Nigel Jenney, chief executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium. "Thanks to FPC and members' efforts in lengthy negotiations we now have positive news for the industry. What's more we have secured clarity with regard to historical invoicing, which will be a welcome bonus in this challenging trading period."

A number of changes had to be made to the IT systems supporting the charging process which meant that invoices for plant health import inspections had not been issued since March 2008. Defra Plant Health has confirmed that companies will not be charged for imports notified to PEACH from 1 March 2008 to 31 October 2008.

From 18 November HMRC will require a quarantine release certificate (QRC), issued following completion of inspection, to secure the release of plant health controlled consignments into free circulation. Defra Plant Health has introduced a trial period from now until 18 November and companies can download a QRC from the PEACH system and fax it to HMRC.

"It's important that companies take the opportunity to use the revised system immediately. This will give approximately a one month trial period to ensure that all aspects of the revised system work satisfactorily from an industry perspective. We welcome feedback from companies during this trial period," added Nigel Jenney.

Defra has updated the Plant Health Guide for Importers, outlining the new arrangements for pre-arrival notification, presentation of documents, inspection and subsequent release of consignments. A new section relating to future calculation of inspection charge, including worked examples, has been added. Information on inspection charges, reduced levels of inspection and the importers guide are available online. A separate guide explaining the arrangements for the pre-arrival notification of plant health controlled consignments using the PEACH system is expected to be made available shortly.

“This will impact on all businesses which import fruit, vegetables or cut flowers, and non-members are profiting off the back of efforts by FPC and its members. Perhaps it’s time for you to invest some of the money you’ve saved into your industry’s future by joining FPC,” added Nigel Jenney.

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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. Companies can contact the Plant Health Imports Helpdesk on 01904 455192; email: phsi-importers@defra.gsi.gov.uk

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