SUBJECT: USDA Launches New Electronic System to Streamline Export Process

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY
                 OFFICIALS

As part of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) overall eGovernment initiative to transform and enhance the delivery of its programs; services; and information, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) launched a new electronic web-based system called Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking (PCIT). Use of the PCIT system is encouraged nationwide.

The PCIT system, currently in the second phase of a multi-phase effort, was implemented to streamline the export process by tracking the inspection of agricultural products and certifying compliance with plant health standards of importing countries. PCIT provides APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) the ability to track and trace back Federal Phytosanitary Certificates, improve reporting capabilities, reduce the incidence of errors or fraud, and better manage the work load of Authorized Certification Officials (ACO). PCIT also provides the capability to allow U.S. exporters to schedule inspections and submit applications online. This system allows users to print the following two forms:

- PPQ Form 577—Federal Phytosanitary Certificate (copy only; original FPC's can only be printed by Authorized Entities and ACOs); and
- PPQ Form 572—Application for Inspection and Certification of Domestic Plant and Plant Products for Export.

PCIT includes many features such as reusable templates, so exporters only have to enter information once. It will also save U.S. exporters a tremendous amount of time and effort spent on paper-based applications.

More enhancements to PCIT are underway, including the ability to apply for other certificates (PPQ Form 578 and PPQ Form 579), as well as creation of a payment engine, so customers can pay Federal user fees as part of the on-line process. This feature is designed and operated in a way to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of applicant information. PCIT is available online at: https://pcit.aphis.usda.gov/pcit/.

/s/ Paul R. Eggert for

Richard L. Dunkle
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine