Trinidad and Tobago’s Phytosanitary Requirements for Fresh Produce – the Considerations

Presented by:
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Research Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
Trinidad and Tobago
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Trinidad and Tobago’s Phytosanitary Requirements for Fresh Produce – the Considerations

- Background - Regulatory Framework
- Phytosanitary Requirements
- Success Story
- Trade Facilitation (T&T and Costa Rica)
- The Way Forward
Regulatory/International Framework

- Plant Protection Act. 1975
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement
- Trade Facilitation Agreement
- WTO SPS Agreement identifies International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as the organisation providing international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs)
What are the Plant Quarantine Services (PQS) offered by the Ministry of Agriculture (T&T)?

- With the importation of plant and plant products into Trinidad and Tobago there is the risk of introducing weeds, insect pests and diseases. These can pose a threat to the natural environment, our food security and economy.

- The Plant Quarantine Service (PQS) regulates trade through the issuance of plant import permits. The plant import permits lists entry conditions (referred to as phytosanitary conditions) which confirms the plant health status of the item being imported into T&T.

- PQS also facilitates exports by ensuring that the conditions of the importing country are met and issues to exporter’s phytosanitary certificates where required.
PLANT AND PLANT products being imported into T&T requires a Plant Import Permit. A phytosanitary certificate from the exporting country is also required.

- There are some exceptions depending on the level of processing of the item to be imported and the risk of introduction of the pests associated with this item being imported into T&T.

- International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 32)
ISPM 32 - Categorization of commodities according to their Pest Risk

ISPM 32 provides the criteria for (NPPOs) of importing countries on how to categorize commodities according to their pest risk when considering import requirements.
What is the importing process?

- Prior to importation, ensure that you are in possession of a plant import permit issued by PQ, MALF.

- Obtain a phytosanitary certificate from the exporter (country of export) when the item is being shipped to T&T.

- These are the documentary requirements for entry of plant and plant products into T&T.
How to apply for a plant import permit and what you need to know?

- Submit electronic applications via the e-permits and Licenses module via TTbizlink.
- Online Applications (www.ttbizlink.gov.tt)
- For further information:
  E-mail: plantquarantine.centeno@gov.tt
  Telephone: 642-0718; 280-7938

*TTBizlink is a Single Electronic Window (SEW) that is a secure, user-friendly online interface that gives businesses and individuals 24/7 access to applications for government’s trade and business services.*
Plant Import Permits

- Import conditions based on (country/commodity/end use) –
Members of the public are advised that **effective Monday 11\textsuperscript{th} May, 2020**, the processing and transmitting of approved Plant Import Permits to clients will be done electronically by the Plant Quarantine Service (PQS) Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.
What you need to know when completing the application?

- Name of the item
- Country of origin
- Exporter information including name, address, contact number and email address
- Total weight of items (kilograms)
- End use of the item (for example, consumption, processing, propagation)
- Proof of residency (ID card/DP) if individual/
- Company registration certificate
Pest risk analysis (PRA) is a form of risk analysis conducted by regulatory plant health authorities to identify the appropriate phytosanitary measures required to protect plant resources against new or emerging pests and regulated pests of plants or plant products.
Phytosanitary conditions exist for the following commodities from Costa Rica:

- Live plants
- Cut flowers and foliage
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Carrot
- Irish potato
- Onion

Carrot and cabbage are mostly imported.
I have received my import permit, what is the next step?

- A copy of the Import Permit **MUST** be presented to the Exporter (country of export) to ensure that the exporter can meet the conditions of entry into T&T.

- A phytosanitary certificate is issued by the authorities (PQ Service) of the exporting country.

- It is the **official document** that confirms to the phytosanitary (health of plants) status of a consignment, indicating that the import conditions set by T&T has been met.
What happens when the item arrives into T&T?

- **Documentary Requirements checked** - Import Permit and Phytosanitary Certificate to ensure compliance. *(E- Declaration)*

- **Physical inspection** - may be conducted randomly based on the associated risks

- **Decisions taken**: Release (if compliance) or detain/laboratory testing/treat or to seize/destroy
Documentary Requirements

Plant Import Permit (T&T)

Phytosanitary Certificate (Costa Rica)
### E-Declarations

- 100% online – Screening of documents (Commercial shipments)
- Release consignments instantaneously
- Ease of Doing Business

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Inspection – Involves Several Levels (ISPMs 23 & 32)

Document verification; Identity Check; Visual Inspection

Pest Interception; Identification; determination of quarantine status of interception

Action to be taken – inspect and release; treat; return; destroy (All based on scientific evidence)
Mobile Inspection Service

- application of Mobile Inspection Service (on TTBizLink) which enables MALF PQS inspectors to perform inspections using tablet devices rather than paper forms.

- This allows for real-time decisions with immediate clearance of goods after inspection.

- Ease of doing business in T&T
The PQS (T&T) must ensure that the consignments to be exported has fully complied with the phytosanitary requirements (as stated in the import permit) of the importing country.

- Verify those requirements where necessary
- Take appropriate measures to ensure compliance
- Issue a Phytosanitary Certificate where compliance is assured
Partners in the Initiative:

- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) - TTBizlink, a Single Electronic Window at www.ttbizlink.gov.tt

- Customs and Excise Division and Port Authority of T&T

- Various T&T Stakeholders (Importers, Exporters, Brokers, Freight Forwarders, Farmers etc.)

- Trading Partners - Global
Trinidad and Tobago closes its borders to Costa Rican cabbage and broccoli

Cooprimex is a small company that currently employs 50 female heads of household in Paso Ancho, Cartago. Diana Valverde, the owner of the company, fears she'll have to lay off staff due to a curb on their export activity.

Other small and medium-sized businesses, including groups of farmers in Cartago and Zarcero, are also being affected the slump in exports.

Cooprimex alone estimates they destroyed 69 thousand kilos of cabbage and 46 thousand kilos of broccoli in a month because they couldn’t export the product and it was no longer suitable for human consumption.

Valverde said that there are agricultural producers who are desperately knocking on their doors because they have nowhere to place the harvest.

Trinidad and Tobago banned the entry of Costa Rican cabbage and broccoli because it will no longer accept products that are fumigated with methyl bromide, a highly toxic chemical.
Article 4: Equivalence (WTO SPS Agreement)

- Members shall accept equivalent SPS measures of other Members when demonstrated that they achieve an appropriate level of protection.
• Countries share the obligation to observe the principle of equivalence by considering pest risk.

• Management alternatives that will facilitate safe trade.

• Systems approaches provide opportunities to develop new and alternative pest risk management strategies

• Development and implementation requires consultation and cooperation. (Costa Rica and T&T)
Re: Costa Rica Contact

Magda Gonzalez Arroyo <mgonzalez@sfe.go.cr>
Thu 5/2/2019 7:42 AM
To: You; dramroop@fp.gov.tt

Dear Ms. Ramroop: I really hope that soon we’ll find a solution to the issue of cabbage trade.

Thanks a lot for responding my e-mail and as soon as we get the list of pests we’ll work out a proposal to the entity you represent.

Kind and warmest regards,

Cordiales saludos

Magda González
JEFE
Normas y Regulaciones
Servicio Fitosanitario del Estado
(506) 2549-3600
www.sfe.go.cr
San José, Costa Rica
Dear Ms. Magda,

Greetings from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago!

I wish to advise that the T&T team have reviewed your proposals and have deliberated on the same. We acknowledge the integrated measures in a systems approach being followed in your production practices and also the packing facility practices.

In this regard, we propose the following phytosanitary conditions as listed below. Please review and provide feedback on the same.

Material shall be free of SOIL, TRASH, ORGANIC MATTER, PLANT PEST, and DISEASE, ..................

Thanks and best regards,

Deanne Ramroop/ IPPC Contact Point.
Summary

- T&T will continue to facilitate the trade with Costa Rica with both imports and exports.
- T&T will continue with enhanced procedures for clearances and has already initiated the process to further improve by use of ePhyto, through the IPPC’s Generic National System (GeNS)
Acknowledgements

- Management and staff of Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Trinidad and Tobago
- Colleagues, Costa Rica
- PROCOMER – Management and Staff
- All stakeholders and trading partners