**Issuance of Ephyto Certificates by India**

The National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) India under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare initiated the process of issuing Ephyto certificates (digitally signed) to all exporters of agricultural commodities to various countries from June 15th 2017. This certificate is to replace the earlier certificates issued manually to exporters. Accordingly, a separate Window was created in our website <http://plantquarantineindia.nic.in> to enable the NPPO of the importing country to activate the Window and download the Ephyto certificates issued to their country. All NPPOs were informed over email by NPPO, India that an unique User ID and Password for each country has been created and the same was shared with them. This will enable all NPPOs to view the Ephyto certificates in their system in the above website. Needless to mention, in the Progress Report of IPPC published in March, 2017 the steps taken by IPPC on E-Phyto has been highlighted for implementing and under Section 3.5 of this report, the IPPC arranged wide ranging seminars and discussion to facilitate the trade without compromising with the Phytosanitary issues of the agricultural produce.

 India, always being a proactive contracting party of IPPC, strives to excel in such activities to safeguard the bio-resources and to facilitate the transparency in trade. In this endeavor and in line with the aim of IPPC, NPPO- India took a step forward in the direction of E-phyto solutions by implementing and issuing of digitally signed Phytosanitary Certificates (PCs) instead of physical copies. This made substantial saving in time and resources of all the stakeholders together-with making the process more transparent, quick, convenient and environment friendly.

**The contents of the new electronic certificate being issued is the same as appeared in the earlier issued manual certificates. Hence, except the mode of issue, the validity and the authenticity of the electronic certificate remains the same. There is no change in the agreed contents to be displayed in the phytosanitary certificate. This will also reduce time in checking the authenticity of the certificate thereby avoiding further delay in clearing the consignments. The digital signature is printed in Ephyto Certificate to add another layer of security feature. We are in the process of sending an automatic Email to the importing country’s NPPO whenever an Ephyto certificate is issued to that country.**

Necessary care has been taken to the bio-security of all the countries and the benefit of Ephyto certificate is in line with the following objectives of IPPC :

i) Reduce fraudulent practices of printing fake certificates;

ii) Improved security in transmission of certificates;

iii) Reduce delays;

iv) Avoid bilateral agreements for direct NPPO to NPPO transfer of electronic certificates;

v) Reduce usage of paper

vi) Ease of doing business

vi) Achieve the eventual linking with World Customs Organisation of ‘single window’ initiative to harmonize codes and processes.

 Please feel free to contact jspp-dac@gov.in or raja.sr@nic.in for any further information / clarifications.

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