

PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

Phytosanitary certificates are intended to reduce the risk of pests and diseases being imported into a country on plant material. However many countries recognise that it is unrealistic to insist on phytosanitary certificates for every batch of plant material which is imported. Thus there are official concessions for small amounts of plant material sent by post, for research purposes, or imported as holiday souvenirs. Furthermore most plant seeds are considered to present a low risk of importing pests and therefore many countries such as The European Union exempt most seeds from phytosanitary certificate requirements.

If a phytosanitary certificate is requested Herbiseed can obtain it on behalf of our customer. Nevertheless, it can be expensive if only small quantities of seed are needed and inevitably delays dispatch of the seed. The reasons are as follows;

Herbiseed must request an official inspector from the government Ministry of Agriculture to come and collect, from our seed store, a sample of each species for which a certificate has been requested. We are not allowed to take our own samples and send them by mail for testing. The inspector comes after a delay which may be up to two weeks. He then sends the samples (100g. of each species) to a Ministry of Agriculture testing station, which takes a few more days. The testing station examines the seed for soil and other contaminants. It then places the seeds of grass species on fungal growth media and incubates them for three weeks. If excess soil is found or certain fungi grow, a phytosanitary certificate is refused and the process has to start again on another batch. The results of the test are then sent to the official inspector and sit in his pending tray until he makes time to write the certificate. The certificate is then sent to Herbiseed, who dispatch the seed to the customer immediately the certificate is received. The customer has to pay for the 100g. samples of each species taken for testing plus the Ministry of Agriculture fees for the tests and sampling time.

Once a phytosanitary certificate has been requested, the delay caused by this bureaucratic process cannot be reduced. Thus it is in the interest of our customers to use methods of importation which do not require a phytosanitary certificate. We can normally deliver the seed to anywhere in the world within one week following receipt of the order. If a phytosanitary certificate is requested, it is desirable to order the seed at least two months ahead of the time it is needed.

For Europe, no phytosanitary certificate is necessary for any type of weed seed. Herbiseed will dispatch an order by airmail post unless the customer requests 48 hour 'Datapost' or courier delivery.

For the USA, orders are dispatched with a phytosanitary certificate by 'Fedex' or the customer's preferred carrier. Fedex arrange the importation and possible inspection by the USDA at the port of entry. This usually takes 3-7days.

Importation to the USA is even quicker if the customer can supply (by fax) a copy of their USDA Import Certificate which we will fix to the outside of the package. This method, of obtaining an Import Certificate, which lasts 5 years, is particularly recommended to our corporate customers in the USA who order several consignments per year. It can be obtained by downloading PPQ form 587 from the APHIS website www.aphis.usda.gov or by contacting: USDA, Plant Protection and Quarantine, 4760 River Road, Unit 136, Riverdale, Maryland, 20737-1236. Telephone: (301) 734-8896. APHIS says that this permit will normally take 10-15 working days to be issued. You can assure them that none of the species in the

Herbiseed range is regulated by CITES regulations, and none of our standard list except *Avena ludoviciana*, *Heracleum mantegazianum*, *Centaurea solstitialis* and *Cuscuta* species are listed in the USDA Part 360-Noxious Weed Regulations'.

For Japan, a simple method which is successfully used by some of our customers is to mail or fax to us, with the order, a label which we stick to the outside of the package. This label states the botanical names of the seeds, their names written in Japanese characters and a statement that the seed is for scientific experiments only. Please fax us the names written in Japanese characters with your order. (Do not e-mail this label because our computer cannot print Japanese characters).

EXAMPLE

試験用種子 (Seed for Experimental Purposes)

ALOPECURUS MYOSUROIDES (Scientific Name)

ノスズメノテッポウ (Japanese Name)

For most other countries, it is usually possible to import up to 1000 grams of seed by mail without a phytosanitary certificate. Some countries such as Korea operate an import permit system for research materials, whereby the importer obtains a permit to import a quantity of seed before ordering it from another country. Obtaining an import permit locally can be much quicker than obtaining a phytosanitary certificate in England.

Summary. It is in the best interest of receiving the seed quickly if the customer uses a method of importation which does not require a phytosanitary certificate. Herbiseed always works quickly and efficiently for our customers. Any incoming order is acted on immediately, either by dispatching the seed the same day or by requesting sampling for a phytosanitary certificate. However we have no influence over the time taken for the certificate to be issued and this can be frustratingly slow. We guarantee that the seed will be dispatched on the same day that we receive the certificate.

Thus we suggest that if seed is needed urgently, the customer uses a method which avoids the need for a phytosanitary certificate.

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