

Electronic Phytosanitary Certificate and the APHIS Core Message Set

Background

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has established multiple working groups to oversee the development of the ePhyto system. This system was developed by the IPPC to facilitate the exchange of phytosanitary certificates between National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO's) of participating countries using a centralized hub. With this centralized hub, phytosanitary data is exchanged between foreign government managed systems or via a Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) supported by the IPPC. Ultimately, ePhyto system(s) create a uniform, harmonized format by which government-to-government data exchange can occur. This practice also assures legitimate trade by preventing fraudulent certificates, which can occur when paper phytosanitary certificates are used.

For customs brokers, the ePhyto can facilitate entry processing. If brokers know an ePhyto has been issued, they can enter the certificate number in the APHIS Core message set, thereby eliminating the need to upload the ePhyto into the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Document Image System (DIS) or present the original. Use of ePhyto's will prevent time delays compared to when inspectors need to verify authenticity of a paper certificate or DIS upload due to the secure nature of the documents. Other advantages include near-real time processing so documents can be shared earlier, and necessary updates do not require the time and resources needed for couriering the paper document.

To facilitate the use of ePhyto in the importation process, APHIS and CBP have developed a process by which an ePhyto can be declared within the APHIS Core message set. Once declared, the ePhyto will validate the country of origin and phytosanitary number allowing a PDF version of the data to be displayed in the DIS for review by inspectors.

How do I know I have an ePhyto?

Often a customs broker may not know that the phytosanitary certificate that they receive with a shipment is in fact an ePhyto that has already been transmitted to APHIS through the ePhyto system. By learning how to identify that the phytosanitary certificate is an ePhyto, the broker can save time in processing the entry and clearing the shipment.

The first step in submitting an ePhyto through the APHIS Core message set is to identify whether the country issuing the certificate participates in the ePhyto program. A list of participating countries, and if they send ePhytos to APHIS, can be found at the following website: [Trading Partners Participating in Electronic Phytosanitary Certification \(ePhyto\)](#). A trading partner that is capable of sending ePhytos to APHIS, may choose not to send an ePhyto for a shipment. This could be due to limitations with the country's ePhyto system, outages, or other reasons.

The next step will be determining if the phytosanitary certificate that was procured is an ePhyto. [Countries using the GeNS system](#) will have standardized ePhytos (found in appendix A). If issued by GeNS, the certificate will contain a QR Code in the upper left hand side of the document. Countries not using GeNS have developed their own certificates. In appendix B, APHIS will provide standard certificate numbering for those countries providing that information. However, importers, exporters and foreign providers should know if the certificate provided is an ePhyto.

How to submit an ePhyto in the APHIS Core message set

A properly filed APHIS Core message set is necessary for an ePhyto to populate within the DIS. The DIS is integrated with the ePhyto system and receives all ePhyto's sent by NPPO's. For the inspecting officer to view and utilize an ePhyto, data must be matched between what was declared by the filer and what was sent via the ePhyto data stream. In the APHIS Core message set, ePhyto is reported within the PG13/14 License, Permit, Certificate, and other (LPCO) . The filer must appropriately report the two-letter country code of the NPPO that issued the ePhyto (PG13 data element "Location"), LPCO Type equal to AE1, LPCO issued date, LPCO commodity quantities, and LPCO (ePhyto) number.

If the ePhyto number is incorrect or does not match the country from which it was issued, the Entry will reject and receive an error code of "PGG." This code will be accompanied by the statement "missing or invalid ePhyto Sanitary Certificate type per PGA." In addition, if an ePhyto has been previously used, a warning error code of "PGH" will display a message "ePhyto Sanitary Certificate Number declared on Separate Entry." When encountering a PGH error, please verify whether the correct number was entered. If the number is valid, the filer may contact the APHIS help desk at 1-833-481-2102 or email the APHIS ACE team at ace.itds@usda.gov for assistance. When encountering a PGH error, determine if you have used the ePhyto previously, and if not, contact the local CBP Agriculture Specialist for more information.

Appendix A – Example of two formats for GeNS-issued ePhyto as a PDF



PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATE

No. 200416025317417

FROM: Plant Protection Organization of _____		TO: Plant Protection Organization(s) of _____	
I. DESCRIPTION OF CONSIGNMENT			
Name and Address of Exporter _____		Declared Name and Address of Consignee _____	
Declared Means of Conveyance _____		Declared Point of Entry _____	
Distinguishing Marks _____			
II. COMMODITIES			
1	Name of Produce and Quantity	Place of Origin	
	_____	_____	
Number and Description of Packages _____			
Distinguishing Marks _____			
Additional Declarations _____			
Additional Official Phytosanitary Information _____			
Additional Information			
Import Permit Number: _____		Date of Inspection: _____	
Treatment 1: _____			



Official Logo

NPPO Name
Department Name Line 1
Department Name Line 2

PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATE

No. 200416025317417

FROM: Plant Protection Organization of		TO: Plant Protection Organization(s) of	
I. DESCRIPTION OF CONSIGNMENT			
Name and Address of Exporter		Declared Name and Address of Consignee	
Name and Description of Transport		Declared Point of Entry	
Distinguishing Marks			
II. COMMODITIES			
1	Name of Produce and Quantity	Place of Origin	
Number and Description of Packages		Distinguishing Marks	
ADDITIONAL DECLARATION			
ADDITIONAL OFFICIAL PHYTOSANITARY INFORMATION			
INSPECTION INFORMATION			
Import Permit Number:		Date of Inspection:	
TREATMENT			

This is to certify that the plants, plant product or other regulated articles described herein have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from the quarantine pests, specified by the importing contracting party and to conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing contracting party including those for regulated non- quarantine pests.

Place of Issue:

Name of authorized officer:

Date:

Signature:



Additional
Logo

Appendix B – Non-GeNS Number Formatting by Country

Below is a list of countries not using GeNS and their respective standard formats. Countries with a blank ePhyto number do send ePhytos to the United States from their own systems, but do not have a standard format. Please consider this as a guide to help identify an ePhyto but formatting used by some countries may vary from what is reported here.

Country	ePhyto Format	Notes
Argentina	ARCFXXXXXXXX	
Brazil		
Chile		
Colombia	CFE-XX-XXXXXX-XX	
Cook Islands		
Costa Rica		
Faroe Islands		
France	PHYTO.FR.XXXX.XXXXX XX	
French Guiana		
Hong Kong	BXXXXX	
Indonesia		
Italy	PHYTO.IT.XXXX.XXXXX X	
Kenya	KEPHIS/X/XXXXXXXX/XXX X	
Korea, Republic of		
Mexico	E-XX-XXXXXX	
Morocco	XXXX/ONSSA/DRX/XXXX XXXXXXXXXX/XXXX	Series in red is not a defined set of characters.
Netherlands		
New Zealand	NLXXXX/XXXXXX/XXXX X	Series in red is not a defined set of characters.
South Africa	NPPO- ZA/XXXX/XX/XXXXXX	Series in red could be only 1 character.
Spain	UE ES / XXXXXXXXB	