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# PPQ to Permanently Allow Uploaded Copies of Phytosanitary Certificates and Forms

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In 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) responded to the unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic on trade by allowing importers of plant commodities to upload copies of phytosanitary certificates and forms to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) using the [Document Image System \(DIS\)](#).

Starting **October 1, 2022**, APHIS and CBP will accept signed original and uploaded copies of phytosanitary certificates and forms for plant commodities. Acceptable documents will include:

- Original hardcopies of phytosanitary certificates on plain paper or security paper that are wet signed or digitally signed;
- Scans of signed original hardcopies of phytosanitary certificates and forms;
- Original hardcopies of foreign site certificates of inspection and/or treatment that are wet signed or digitally signed, and wet signed or digitally signed copies of the master PPQ Form 203;
- Scans or digital copies of signed foreign site certificates of inspection and/or treatment and master PPQ Form 203s; and

- Phytosanitary certificates created through a participating country's ePhyto system.

PPQ and CBP will continue to accept digital exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates through the ePhyto system—a government-to-government sharing of electronic phytosanitary certificates.

The APHIS Core message set supports the transmission of [ePhytos](#). A paper certificate would not need to be presented for cargo clearance by U.S. officials if the certificate is an ePhyto with a proper declaration in the APHIS Core message set using the PG13/14 code AE1. Please review the [list of participating ePhyto countries](#).

**Note: A trading partner that is marked “Yes” may choose to not send an ePhyto message set for a shipment. This could be due to limitations with the country's system, outages, or other reasons.**

For more information about plant or plant product imports, email [plantproducts.permits@usda.gov](mailto:plantproducts.permits@usda.gov) or call 1-877-770-5990. For questions about plant or plant product exports, contact your [local export certification specialist](#) or email [ppgexportservices@usda.gov](mailto:ppgexportservices@usda.gov). For questions about ACE DIS, see [implementation guide](#).