

Conformity checks (inspections) for compliance with EC Marketing Standards are completed before Customs clearance if the consignment is from a non-approved Third Country. Consignments arriving with a valid conformity certificate from an approved third country may be subject to a post-clearance check.

Coverage is from 7am to 5pm five days a week, except for Heathrow, which is from 6am until 10pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 10pm at the weekends. This is coverage of Peach, and does not necessarily mean availability of inspectors for physical inspections.

### **What happens during an import inspection**

The application is submitted by importer or agent (if this is completed by the agent, then they are required to be formally 'linked' to their importer on the Peach system).

It is risk-assessed by Peach (where the inspection date is no more than five days into the future).

Import inspectors check Peach on a regular basis throughout the working day. They will make decisions on any applications that are on amber status, and plan their work around red-balled consignments. The trade will be notified, and be able to see, when an inspector has made a decision on an amber consignment.

The entry is submitted to Customs. It is coded L, because there is no conformity certificate present. Therefore designated route #1 in Chief. It cannot clear because there is no conformity certificate present. Customs issues a query to the clearing agent.

The Horticultural Marketing Inspector will then follow normal local arrangements for the inspection of the consignment.

The consignment is checked for conformity with the rules laid down in the appropriate EC marketing standard regarding quality and labelling. Sampling is according to the ISO sampling table. Packages are selected at random according to the number of packages in the consignment:

Number of packages in consignment	Packages to be sampled
0-100	5
101-300	7
301-500	9
501-1000	10
1000+	15 minimum

Fewer boxes may be inspected if no problems are found. Results are recorded on eHMI/Peach. If no labelling defects are found on the packaging, and quality defects are within the tolerances allowed, the inspector will change the status of the consignment on Peach, as soon as possible, if not immediately, after the completion of the inspection.

This change of status is notified to the trade via an e mail, which allows a conformity certificate to be printed by the importer or agent. This must be sent to the National Clearance Hub to gain clearance for the consignment.

In the event of an inspector finding a problem, the importer or agent will be contacted to inform them of this. The refusal of entry document HCG3 is issued; the trader needs the reference number on this for the undertaking. The undertaking is submitted to the HMI via a form in Peach (the HCG4) to inform the inspector of the nature of the intended corrective action, and any other destinations involved. The inspector faxes the HCG3 and the HCG4 to the NCH, with the entry number written on each document.

If the corrective action takes place at the import point, the inspector will re-inspect the consignment when notified that this has taken place. A conformity certificate will be issued, but this will be a hard copy, printed off and signed and stamped and posted/faxed/handed to the importer or agent. The consignment will not be released via Peach in the way that it would if no problem had been found on inspection.

If the corrective action is to take place away from the import point, the proposed destination has to be approved by the HMI first. The consignment is then permitted to travel there. An application for Simplified or Temporary Processing under Customs Control (PCC) may also have to be made to Customs by the clearing agent in light of the fact that movement without Customs clearance is required. This application to HMRC will not be necessary if the importer or selected third party destination premises already has full PCC status. The importer is then allowed to transport the consignment to his premises for the corrective action to be taken. The consignment will be re-inspected at an agreed date and time. It is the responsibility of the importer to notify the local rpa inspector (HMI) of when the re-inspection is to take place, before produce is allowed into free circulation

The inspector in the destination area will issue the conformity certificate (or processing certificate where appropriate) without the need for a second Peach application by the importer/agent.

### **Additional information**

HMI inspectors are trained to check for presence of a notifiable pest or disease on consignments of fruit. The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate would be contacted if a pest or disease is found that is suspected to contravene phytosanitary rules.

Traders should register to Peach to take advantage of the risk-assessment facility. This should be done well in advance of the arrival of the consignment. The alternative is to submit a paper application (the forms are available online), and this will always result in an inspection.

Inspectors will reject Peach applications (black ball) if a Peach applicant enters inaccurate information.

PEACH will eventually communicate with the HMRC CHIEF system to give release decisions on both HMI and Plant Health controlled imports, thereby removing the need to present certification to Customs at the National Clearance Hub (NCH). To allow the systems to interact, IBM is developing the Automatic License Verification System (ALVS) which is due to be completed by Spring 2008.