APHA Briefing Note 16/20
Export Health Certificate Printing on Plain White Paper during the Coronavirus Restrictions
Date issued: 24 April 2020

Purpose
1. To inform Certifying Officers (Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Environmental Health Officers (EHO)) located in England, Scotland and Wales of temporary measures being introduced to enable Export Health Certificates (EHC) for certain Third Countries to be printed on plain white paper.

Background
2. EHCs for the United Kingdom to Third Countries are normally issued using Crown Vellum Watermarked security paper to provide anti-fraud assurance to Importing Competent Authorities of the authenticity of UK certification.

3. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, changes to notification procedures for the export of live animals and animal products are being negotiated with key importing countries in order to support continuity of trade. These measures are needed to take account of reduced availability of officials, temporary closure of Government offices and disruption to courier and logistics services.

4. Defra have agreed with a number of Third Country Competent Authorities for the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to produce EHCs on plain white paper as a temporary measure to assist both APHA in issuing EHCs and to facilitate certification procedures of export services. These procedures are only a temporary measure during the coronavirus restrictions, will only apply to EHCs where negotiations with Third Country Competent Authorities have been successful and will revert to business as usual procedures when it is possible to do so without restricting export trade. These agreements are expected to be in place initially until 1 July 2020 and may be extended in agreement with the importing countries.
5. The following Third Countries have agreed to the use of EHCs on plain white paper to date. Certifying Officers are advised to monitor this APHA Briefing Note for additional countries being included in this list:
   - Australia
   - Gibraltar
   - South Africa
   - USA.

**Temporary Procedures during the Coronavirus Restrictions**

6. Where Defra have negotiated the use of plain white paper, APHA will issue the EHC to the Certifying Officer by email. The email will contain instructions on these procedures for the Certifying Officer relevant to the EHC you are issuing.

7. The Certifying Officer must print the EHC on plain white paper. For EHCs that are three or four pages in length, the EHC can be printed as an A3 booklet where A3 printing facilities are available. If A3 booklet printing facilities are not available, the EHC can be printed on A4 plain white paper which can be double or single sided.

8. If the EHCs consists of multiple pieces of paper, Certifying Officers must adhere to APHA’s guidance on fan stamping EHCs which is available on the APHA Vet Gateway

9. After completing inspection/examination of the export consignment and certification procedures to complete the plain white paper EHC, the Certifying Officer must scan and email a copy of the EHC to the Exporter and APHA, retaining a copy of the EHC for their own records.

10. The scanned copy of the EHC must be emailed to APHA on the same day of signature to enable APHA to submit a pre-notification of the export to the Importing Competent Authority, where required. Any delay in returning scanned emailed EHCs to APHA could result in consignments being held at the Border Control Point/Entry Point.

11. The email to APHA should contain the following details in the subject line of the email: White Paper – name of destination country – EHC serial number. This will enable to APHA to promptly identify plain white paper EHCs that require further action to notify the destination country, when a consignment has been dispatched.

12. For certain countries, it may be necessary for the Certifying Officer to provide additional information that has been requested by that country. Where this is applicable, APHA will include the details in the email to you requesting this information to be provided to APHA with the scanned copy of the EHC.
13. Where possible, the Certifying Officer should provide the original wet signed and stamped EHC to the exporter to accompany the consignment from point of dispatch to arrival in the importing country. If this is not possible, the Certifying Officer must retain the original wet signed white paper copy securely.

14. If the Certifying Officer has not been able to provide to the exporter the original wet signed and stamped EHC, the exporter must print the scanned EHC provided by the Certifying Officer to accompany the consignment. The exporter can provide their Importing Agent in the destination country with the scanned email EHC, if required, to assist with clearance at the Border Control Point/Entry Point.

15. Upon receipt of the scanned EHCs from Certifying Officers, APHA will:
   - authenticate each EHC against their Export Management System (EMS) by verifying:
     - the EHC has been certified by the Certifying Officer it was issued to
     - the EHC has not already been certified previously and is a unique EHC, and
     - will update the EMS database with the details of the Certifying Officer (name and stamp number) and the date of certification to ensure the EHC is recorded as having been certified/used for export
   - send a notification of the certified EHC, using an EHC on plain white paper, to the destination country to enable clearance of the consignment at the Border Control Point/Entry Point.

16. APHA will also respond to any correspondence from Importing Competent Authorities if any queries are received as to the authenticity of a white paper EHC. APHA may contact Certifying Officers to complete authenticity checks should the need arise.

**Further Information**

- Certification guidance can be found in the Exports guidance on the [APHA Vet Gateway](#)

- Specific guidance regarding fan stamping of EHCs can be found in the Exports guidance Certification Procedures page of the [APHA Vet Gateway](#)

- Any queries relating to these temporary procedures should be sent to: [exports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:exports@apha.gov.uk)

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