

Let Britain Grow!

Campaign to improve the post-Brexit trade in plants and trees: - a two stage plan

The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) represents UK garden centres, commercial growers, landscapers, and manufacturers. We have a vibrant and ambitious horticulture industry in the UK, producing, selling, and planting some of the iconic plants and trees that UK consumers and people globally associate with this country. But like all industries, we rely on and benefit from trade. That includes with the EU - the single biggest import and export market for the UK industry.

The current plant health restrictions, particularly on imports, is adding costs and burdens to the industry to the tune of £25m-£30m. This is particularly hitting small businesses in the sector hard. That is why we have established the 'Let Britain Grow' campaign - to work with Government to ensure the UK horticulture industry can develop economic growth and with it, reap the benefits from Brexit. This means establishing a clearer trade relationship with the EU on how plants and trees can be moved across our borders, while protecting biosecurity.

This two stage, ten point plan will improve the efficacy in phytosanitary and border control processes into the future: -

Stage 1 – in the short-term, introduce a more proportionate plant health regulatory regime for the import of plants and seeds by:

- Conduct an immediate review and evaluation of the first 6 months of 2021 cross-border trade before Q1 2022. This will see the development of a joint formal regular review mechanism between Defra, APHA/SASA and industry to include fees, the plant risk hierarchy and inspections based on seasonal reviews of data and experience before Q1 2022.
- Ensure Border Control Posts and Inland Control Points systems and processes are fit for purpose and are industry-ready well in time for 1 January 2022.
- Ensure import & export IT systems and processes are fit for purpose and are industry-ready well in time for 1 January 2022.
 - Including developing, in collaboration with industry an e-phyto system before the end of 2021.
- Reduce the time period for granting an export certificate and inspection from 7 days to 24 hours.
- Work with industry to develop a Trusted Trader scheme, incorporating relevant certification, accreditation and/or assurance schemes within the supply chain, to allow reduction in the overall level of inspections and a more flexible approach to processes for scheme members.
- Formalise the sharing of a consistent set of international trade data, developed through the pre-notification and inspection data gathered by Defra & APHA in order to enhance biosecurity in trade, maintain efficient supply chains and develop export markets.

Stage 2 – establish a plant health agreement with the EU for the import and export of plants, seeds and trees, by:

- Recognise respective plant health regimes, particularly inspection approaches, taking an intelligence led approach. Build competence and trust between phytosanitary processes and regimes in order to reduce the need for inspections and certification.
- Work towards achieving recognition of plant passporting systems, including digitisation of tracing and inspection data between the UK and EU member states.
- Develop a single entry point for customs and SPS data.
- Reach a pragmatic solution to the movement of plants from GB to Northern Ireland without inspections and phytosanitary certificates.
- Ease restrictions and associated costs for CITES requirements between the EU and GB, recognising the artificial propagation of commonly traded plants presenting no harm to wild populations.

For more information contact policy@hta.org.uk.