

## California Citrus Preclearance Program

### **Pre-Clearance Program Information Packet**

Thank you for your participation in the California Citrus Preclearance Program for Australia. This is the information you will need to schedule inspections for the preclearance program.

The Australian Importers Association and the California Citrus Quality Council (CCQC) work with USDA/APHIS and the Australia Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) on the overall planning and policies involved with this program.

In order to participate in this program, packers must be registered with the California Citrus Quality Council and certified under the Work Plan by USDA. No AQIS pre-clearance inspections will be scheduled for any participant who is not registered and does not have the required USDA/APHIS certification. In addition, importers participating in this program must be registered with the Australian Importers Association (AHEA). Inspections cannot be scheduled for importers who are not registered.

Participants must attend a USDA Workshop on the program to be certified. The regularly scheduled workshops have been completed at this point. If your company did not attend one of the scheduled workshops, you will need to contact USDA for a supplemental training session. Please call Tracy Novak-Marin, USDA/APHIS at 661-391-1742.

The USDA and program coordinator workshop presentations are available on the CCQC website, [www.calcitrusquality.org](http://www.calcitrusquality.org). If you have any questions or encounter any difficulties with the certification, please contact the program coordinator, Dave Riggs, immediately by email at [daveriggs@quailrun.net](mailto:daveriggs@quailrun.net) or phone at 831.662.9620 or James Cranney, CCQC, at 530 885-1894.

If you have any questions, please contact me via phone or e-mail. I will be in touch with you shortly to discuss program logistics.

Dave Riggs, Program Coordinator

110 Chase Lane, Aptos, California 95003  
Phone: 831.662.9620  
Cell: 831.419.2972  
Email: [daveriggs@quailrun.net](mailto:daveriggs@quailrun.net)

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### Request for Inspections and Scheduling

The following is the procedure to request an inspection, schedule the time and coordinate of all agencies involved:

1. Request for Inspection (RFI) must be emailed to the program coordinator no later than **12:00 noon** of the day prior to the requested inspection. You may request an inspection as soon as you know when your lot will be ready, but no later than noon on the day before the inspection is required. Provide as much lead time as possible to ensure your loads are inspected by your shipping deadline.
2. Please contact the county directly to schedule the county phytosanitary inspection which must also be completed before the load is eligible for shipment. The county inspection must begin before the AQIS inspection, so please give the county ample lead time to schedule the required inspections.
3. Use the Request for Inspection (RFI) form sent with this packet. Please save the RFI form on your computer. Complete the form and email it to [citrusexports@sbcglobal.net](mailto:citrusexports@sbcglobal.net) and save the completed form under a different name. If you must send your request via fax you must send the RFI to **both** of the following numbers – 831.662.9609 and 831.688.8705.
4. You will assign an RFI number for each inspection which will be used for tracking the load throughout the inspection cycle. The RFI number format is CO MODAYR N – Company, Month, Day, and Year, DR 120407.
5. The program coordinator will e-mail a confirmation of receipt of the RFI to the participant. If you do not receive a confirmation on the day you send in the RFI call 831.419.2972.
6. Due to the number of participants and geographic area involved, the most efficient sequence of the inspections will be used. Please provide the anticipated shipping or pack-out date so we can ensure your load will be inspected before your shipping deadline.
7. The program coordinator will email the schedule of inspections to AQIS and County Inspectors and notify participants of the scheduled inspections everyday by 4:00 p.m. If you do not receive a confirmation with your assigned inspection time please call us.
8. The program coordinator is the liaison between the participants, AQIS, USDA/APHIS and the County to resolve any difficulty or answer any questions that may arise related to the scheduling of inspections. Please do not contact AQIS inspectors directly.
9. If there is any change, delay or cancellation for the requested inspection, participants must contact the program coordinator immediately.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, contact Dave Riggs, Program Coordinator,

110 Chase Lane, Aptos, California 95003

Phone: 831.662.9620

Cell: 831.419.2972

Email: [daveriggs@quailrun.net](mailto:daveriggs@quailrun.net)

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### SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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**NOIs, lot numbers and pallet tags** - The Work Plan allows packers to use either pallet tags or grower lot numbers to identify the inspection lot on the NOI presented at the time of inspection. Please review the identification system you plan to use with USDA and AQIS at the start of the season. Make sure you use the same system consistently through the season and make sure the phytosanitary certificates issued by the County are consistent with the NOI.

**Loads must be identified with either lot numbers marked on all boxes or unique pallet tags for each pallet.** Lot numbers or Pallet Tag numbers are entered on the NOI (copy attached). AQIS inspectors will check the lot numbers or pallet tag numbers against the NOI before selecting a sample for inspection. If the load identification is not accurate, complete and consistent with the Work Plan, they cannot proceed to conduct the pre-clearance inspection. The load identification is critical to the trace-back requirements of the Work Plan, so shippers must demonstrate that the load identification allows a complete trace-back in the event of any problem with the load in Australia.

**Read the Work Plan carefully.** The Work Plan is the product of negotiations between USDA and the AQIS and is precise about program requirements. Neither USDA nor AQIS officials in California have flexibility to change the provisions of the Work Plan.

Ensure that **shipping personnel who must implement the program are briefed** on the requirements of the Work Plan.

**Paper Work** – AQIS is very precise in terms of paper work requirements and is even more demanding for pre-cleared product. If the documents accompanying the load are inaccurate, incomplete or confusing, there is a good chance that your load will be delayed or re-inspected. It is important that the NOI, Lot Numbers or Pallet Tags are accurate and consistent with the Work Plan.

**Sanitation** in the fruit path and in the inspection area is critical. Make sure your inspection area is not vulnerable to introduction of pests during the inspection procedure. Packers must also maintain good sanitation during the storage and delivery of the product to the shipping point.

**Inspection Recipes** presented upon the completion of the AQIS inspection are the bases for tracking, billing and invoicing for both importers and packers. Inspection receipts are signed by the AQIS officer and authorized personnel on behalf of the Packer. Please ensure that the receipt is accurate before signing and keep a copy of the signed receipt with the NOI. For loads involving multiple importers, varieties or pack sizes, please use the attached shipment roster.

If you have any questions, please call me at 831.662.9620 immediately or contact Tracy Novak-Marin, USDA/APHIS at 661-391-1742.

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### Inspection Fees and Receipts

Expenses for the pre-clearance program are paid by the packer and the importer. The importers are responsible for all AQIS expenses including the fee for services charged by AQIS, travel to and from California, accommodations and transportation while on duty here. Packers are responsible for program coordination, data reporting and logistics. Fee must cover the cost of the program. At the end of the season the total cost of the program is pro-rated to packers and importers based on the number of boxes inspected.

The number of boxes for each packer, varieties shipped and volume to importers is tracked by inspection receipts presented by AQIS at the end of each inspections. AQIS and a representative of the packers will sign the receipt. Please ensure the following:

1. The person signing the receipt is authorized to do so.
2. The receipt is checked for accuracy in terms of the box count and importers
3. Please keep a copy of the receipt on file in case any follow-up is required. We recommend attaching a copy of the NOI to the receipt and keeping both in a file for ready access.

It has come to our attention that some importers in Australia are requesting a special pack which is somewhat smaller than the standard citrus pack. As pilot program, this season, CCQC will track volume in this pack and charge differently for it. Therefore, the following pack sizes will be tracked and counted proportionately:

#### **Pack Size Definition**

Std - Standard pack – counted as one box

Aus - 15 Kg special Australia pack – counted as .85 of a std. box

Small - Mandarin Type pack – counted as ½ of a std. box

To accurately track pack sizes and volume by importer, please use the attached shipment roster for any orders with multiple pack sizes or importers. Present this form with the NOI when the AQIS officer arrives for the inspection. The packer's signature on this form will affirm that the box counts shown are accurate.

Please keep in mind that this is a pilot program. We appreciate any feedback on this system in place for tracking and billing. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at any time.

Dave Riggs  
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