

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) are working 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 Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (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.

If you encounter any difficulties or problems with the certification, please contact the program coordinator, Dave Riggs, immediately by email to 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

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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. The Request for Inspection form was sent to you via email along with other necessary documents. Please save the RFI form on your computer. For each inspection, complete the form and email it to 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.
3. 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, Year and inspection number – i.e. DR 120407-1. The second inspection lot on the same day would be DR 120407-2.
4. 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 the RFI in, call 831.419.2972.
5. Inspections are scheduled on a first come basis. However, 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.
6. The program coordinator will fax the schedule of inspections to AQIS and County Inspectors and notify participants of the scheduled inspections by 5:00 p.m. If you do not receive a confirmation with your assigned inspection time please call us.
7. 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.
8. If there is any change, delay or cancellation for the requested inspection, participants must contact the program coordinator immediately.
9. Due to increasing demand for services, inspectors will adhere to a 30 minute rule - inspectors can only wait for 30 minutes after the scheduled start time for inspections after which they will go to the next scheduled job and return when, and if, possible.

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

110 Chase Lane, Aptos, California 95003

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SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NOIs, lot numbers and pallet tags

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, AQIS, puts a very high priority on accurate paper work and clear identification of inspected loads. 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.

The following are other suggestions and recommendations to ensure that your inspections go smoothly and you are in compliance with the requirements of the Work Plan:

1. **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.
2. Ensure that **shipping personnel who must implement the program are briefed** on the requirements of the Work Plan.
3. **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 100 percent accurate and consistent with the Work Plan at the very beginning. USDA and AQIS are prepared to help packers, but an understanding of the requirements of the Work Plan is essential.
4. **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.

If you have any questions, please call me at 831.662.9620 immediately or contact Bill Abel, USDA/APHIS at (661) 201-3034.

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