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USDA Strengthens Service for America's Agricultural Exporters

APHIS Announces Improvements to its Phytosanitary Certificate and Issuance Tracking System

WASHINGTON, February 16, 2012—America's agricultural exporters play a vital role in building an economy that continues to grow, innovate and out-compete the rest of the world. Farm exports in fiscal year (FY) 2011 showed record growth, reaching a high of \$137.4 billion, and supported 1.15 million jobs here on the home front. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) supports trade and economic growth by continually striving to improve services for American exporters.

To that end, APHIS is making several improvements to its Phytosanitary Certificate and Issuance Tracking (PCIT) system. In the coming months, PCIT will begin automatically transferring phytosanitary certificates to foreign countries receiving U.S. exports, reducing previous delays associated with paperwork verification. In addition, APHIS is expanding the availability of user-printed phytosanitary certificates, eliminating the need for users to pay for shipped documents.

"Strong agricultural trade is the key to building and strengthening this nation's economy," said Rebecca Blue, Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. "USDA is dedicated to providing U.S. businesses with the resources they need to reach consumers around the world. Improvements to our PCIT system reduce delays to our customers and reduce government labor costs by eliminating redundancies." PCIT creates a one stop shop by allowing exporters to apply and pay for all Federal, state and county fees at one time. This eliminates paperwork and reduces the time associated with fee collection and tracking. Some state and local governments have reported that PCIT has allowed them to shift personnel responsibilities and resources from fee collection to other revenue-generating duties.

PCIT, which automates the issuance of a phytosanitary certificates for agricultural commodities exported to foreign countries, was created in 2005. Today, thousands of industry users and hundreds of Federal and state duty stations are actively using PCIT. In FY2011, APHIS, state and county governments issued more than 530,000 export certificates for individuals and businesses through the PCIT system.

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