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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES RECOMMENDATION

# Recommendation on: Internet trade (e-commerce) in plants and other regulated articles

ADOPTED 2014 | PUBLISHED 2017



**International Plant Protection Convention**  
Protecting the world's plant resources from pests

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### **Publication history**

*This is not an official part of the CPM Recommendation.*

2013-04 presented and discussed at CPM-8.

2014-04 CPM-9 adopted the CPM recommendation on *Internet trade (e-commerce) in plants and other regulated articles (R-05)*.

2016-12 CPM Bureau reviewed and agreed with IPPC Secretariat proposed ink amendments.

2017-04 CPM-12 agreed with the reformatting and incorporating of ink amendments.

Publication history last modified: 2017-04

## BACKGROUND

Sales of plants and plant products ordered through the internet (e-commerce) has increased significantly in the years since the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and most International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) were adopted. E-commerce is fuelling an increasing volume of traded commodities. In many cases online traders of plants and plant products do not take into account a customer's location before agreeing to a sale and shipping their purchases to them. This lack of knowledge of a customer's location can lead to consignments of regulated articles being imported into a country without the phytosanitary certificates that may be required by the national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) of that country.

A number of studies, including an Implementation Review and Support System study on internet trade presented at the Seventh session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-7, 2012), have shown that regulated articles ordered over the internet are routinely not accompanied by appropriate phytosanitary certificates during import. Similar concerns have also been identified with other forms of distance selling, such as mail order companies who trade via advertisements in newspapers and magazines.

In order for the global plant protection framework to keep pace with this, NPPOs and regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) should collaborate with other stakeholders to monitor internet trade and to ensure that goods ordered in this way comply with relevant phytosanitary regulations on the basis of risk analysis. This requires improvements in collaboration, monitoring and enforcement across the pathways known for transporting those goods, particularly postal and express delivery services.

## ADDRESSED TO

Contracting parties, NPPOs and RPPOs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This Recommendation applies to a variety of products ordered and delivered through e-commerce. It includes plants for planting, other articles such as plants for consumption, soils, growing media, and living organisms that are known or have the potential to be plant pests and are sold to and exchanged by hobbyists, collectors, researchers, etc. Many of these articles may be sold in a variety of product configurations that may incorporate or be infused with plants for planting though the product itself may not be recognized immediately to contain them (e.g. articles of clothing, footwear, packaging, greeting cards, paper products, home accessories or novelty products). To respond to this developing situation, the Commission *encourages* NPPOs and RPPOs to:

- (a) *develop* mechanisms for identifying e-commerce traders based within their countries and regions.
- (b) *establish* mechanisms to identify products of concern that may be purchased via e-commerce, with a focus on potential high-risk pathways such as plants for planting, soils and growing media and living organisms, and to explore options ensuring they comply with appropriate phytosanitary regulations based on risk assessment.
- (c) *promote* compliance by customers and traders operating through e-commerce with the phytosanitary import requirements of importing countries and provide adequate information on the risks posed by by-passing such requirements.
- (d) *strengthen* coordination with postal and express courier services to ensure that relevant information of the phytosanitary risks and phytosanitary measures are conveyed to e-commerce traders.
- (e) *investigate* the phytosanitary risks posed by all forms of distance selling and if necessary to include these purchasing methods in their risk management activities.
- (f) *raise* awareness of the risks of bypassing phytosanitary regulations.

## RECOMMENDATION(S) SUPERSEDED BY THE ABOVE

None.

## IPPC

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international plant health agreement that aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests. International travel and trade are greater than ever before. As people and commodities move around the world, organisms that present risks to plants travel with them.

### Organization

- ◆ There are over 180 contracting parties to the IPPC.
- ◆ Each contracting party has a national plant protection organization (NPPO) and an Official IPPC contact point.
- ◆ Nine regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) work to facilitate the implementation of the IPPC in countries.
- ◆ IPPC liaises with relevant international organizations to help build regional and national capacities.
- ◆ The Secretariat is provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

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