

## Improving Communication within the Export Certification Workgroup August 15, 2023

In 2021 the Strategic Alliance Export Certification Group identified opportunities which existed for improvements to the Export Certification Workgroup (ECW) that could lead to an even more efficient and effective Export Program. The review was completed in June 2021 and suggestions from the Strategic Alliance Export Certification Group were implemented December 8, 2021.

The ECW was created over 7 years ago with the purpose of increasing collaboration between officials involved in export certification activities across federal, state, and county cooperators. Members include PPQ Phytosanitary Issues Management, PPQ Field Operations, National Plant Board representatives, and California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association representatives. ECW meetings are scheduled quarterly, and ad hoc meetings are scheduled when requested by ECW members. ECW meetings include reviewing changes to functionality within the Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking (PCIT) System, discussing issues related to quality control and reporting efforts, reviewing Export Certification Manual (XPM) updates and export policy changes, and discussing export issues that have been identified.

Improvements which have been implemented since the Strategic Alliance Export Certification Group review include the creation of a group charter and increased solicitation of agenda items for group discussion. The group charter serves as a source for ECW members to illustrate the focus and direction of the workgroup. It also can be used educate others (e.g., leadership, other workgroups), explaining the direction and importance of the ECW. The charter includes an agreement among members on the group's purpose, scope, and communication strategy. Scheduling ECW meetings well in advance and soliciting agenda items for the future meetings was prioritized. A tentative agenda is shared prior to meetings to encourage members to provide feedback or additional agenda items.

The outcome of the improvements which were implemented because of the Strategic Alliance Export Certification Group review is an increased understanding of ECW goals by ECW members and others, improved communication among ECW members, and a renewed commitment to working together to strengthen and support the US Export Program.