



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Plant Protection and
Quarantine

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June 4, 2019

Mr. Chris Logue
President, Eastern Plant Board
New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
10 B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

Dear Mr. Logue,

Thank you for the recent resolution from the Eastern Plant Board requesting that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continue to support the needs of exporters. In the resolution, the Eastern Plant Board requests APHIS to provide adequate communication about the availability of Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) re-accreditation training and to permanently fill the Export Certification Specialist (ECS) positions. We are committed to fulfilling both requests.

When ACOs are in need of re-certification, APHIS communicates with ACOs that their certification status will expire through notifications in the Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking system. In addition, the ECS sends an email to the ACOs reminding them to take the re-certification training prior to their expiration date. This process has worked well since implementation in 2013. When the ACOs are unable to recertify within the required period, we have and will continue to extend authorizations for 30 days and provided additional reminders of training due dates.

In regard to online training opportunities, APHIS is in the process of updating the ACO training materials based on current practices, trends, and migrating it to a new training platform. An updated training will be available to ACOs in AgLearn by December 2019. We also provide in-person initial training for new ACOs to ensure that states have sufficient personnel to conduct phytosanitary certification. We encourage ACOs to communicate with their ECS as questions arise.

In addition, APHIS is in the process of permanently filling the only vacant ECS position in the Eastern Plant Board region. We hope to fill the position by December 2019. For information on continuous coverage for all states, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/sa_export/export_services_program.

APHIS recognizes the importance of exports and works with our state partners to facilitate safe trade. We appreciate the Eastern Plant Board sharing issues of importance to your states and assure you that we will continue to provide support.

Sincerely,

Osama El-Lissy
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection and Quarantine