

All you need to know about plant passporting

by **Ian Murgatroyd**, EU Exit Plant Health Regulations Lead, and **Dr John Morgan**, head of plant health, Forestry Commission England

Introduction of plant passporting for certain wood movements in UK

The introduction of plant passports for timber movements will align the UK with the European Union's new Plant Health Regulation (PHR), applying on 14 December 2019. Plant passports improve biosecurity by providing traceability and assurance that plant material being transported is free from regulated pests.

Plant passports are currently required for the movement of some species for planting in the nursery trade. Under the new PHR, the scope will be enhanced to cover an increased range of plants for planting, as well as plant health forestry regulated material.

Plant health forestry regulated material includes all conifers, *Castanea* species (including sweet chestnut) with bark, and *Platanus* species (eg plane) with or without bark. When PHR applies in December, this material will need to be accompanied by a plant passport if it is to be moved within the UK.

For these species, a plant passport will be required at each stage of the supply chain - where whole or chipped roundwood (including brush) is moved from the harvesting site and/or site of aggregation, to the processor. A plant passport will also be required for the movement of isolated bark from a wood processor to a bark processor, for Christmas trees over three metres tall, and for cut conifer foliage taken from trees over three metres tall. Isolated bark means bark which has been removed (by de-barking or other types of processing) or has become detached from a living, felled or fallen tree.

Plant passporting for spruce timber movements with bark is currently being piloted in the *Ips typographus* demarcated area in the southeast of England.

The Forestry Commission (FC) is directly responsible for managing plant health forestry regulated material in England, as well as having delegated responsibility for managing this material for the devolved administrations of Scotland and Wales.

As part of the UK Plant Health Service, the FC is facilitating the introduction of plant passports for forestry regulated material. This includes coordination of a Timber Plant Passporting Working Group comprised of UK government officials and representatives from the forestry sector (including Confor). The FC is also developing an online learning package to support professional operators in issuing plant passports, which will be available later in the year.

For GB, the Forestry Commission will be responsible for completing annual inspections of businesses issuing

plant passports to ensure these comply with the Plant Health Regulation. Inspection frequency may be reduced to once every two years, where a Pest Risk Management Plan approved by the competent authority has been in place for two years. The FC are investigating inspection models, including using contract inspectors to reduce the burden on industry.

UK Chief Plant Health Officer, Nicola Spence said: "I am delighted to see the introduction of timber plant passporting, it's important that our biosecurity measures meet the highest of standards and we need to do all we can to ensure any plant material being transported to the UK is free from regulated pests. I'm really pleased that the Forestry Commission is working with Confor and the wider forestry sector to help achieve this, and I fully support the work they are doing".

Benefits of plant passporting

The adoption of timber plant passporting will demonstrate that the forest industry is committed to the highest standards of biosecurity. Furthermore, the use of plant passports by the forestry sector will improve

Continued on p16

WHFPdotcom



LAYOUT OF A PLANT PASSPORT

Examples of plant passports (figures 1 and 2) for the movement of conifer wood, wood products, isolated bark and controlled Christmas trees/cut foliage and brush within GB, and use the ZP (Protected Zone) pest codes for the conifer bark beetles of *Ips amitinus* a8, *Ips duplicatus* a10, and *Ips typographus* a12.

In the examples, the elements of the plant passport are annotated by red numerals with an explanation below;

- 1** The EU flag which may be printed in colour, or in black and white, either with white stars on a black background or vice versa.
- 2** The words 'Plant Passport — PZ' in English.
- 3** Scientific name(s) of protected zone quarantine pest(s) or, alternatively, the codes specifically attributed to those pests.
- 4** The botanical name(s) of the plant(s) species or taxon(s) concerned. For all conifers the Order Pinales can be used and for sweet chestnut *Castanea* must be used and for plane, *Platanus* must be used.
- 5** The two-letter code for the Member State in which the professional operator issuing the plant passport is registered. The code for the UK (including Northern Ireland) is GB. The alphabetical, numerical or alphanumeric national registration number of the professional operator concerned.
- 6** The traceability code (delivery advice note numbers can be used) of the plant, plant product or the other object concerned.



Woodlands Management Ltd, Goodtown, Oldshire		DELIVERY ADVICE NOTE		
Harvest Name: Sustainable Forest		Certification Status: FSC 100%	Delivery Advice Note Number: 123456	
WfM Contract No.: S350032		Certificate Number: AA-COC-0000000	PIN Supplier Ref.:	
Customer Name & Delivery Site: ABC Sawmills, Wuden		Supplier Contract No.: Sustainable Forest Cpt 1		
Haulier: Wonder Wood		Vehicle Reg: AAD0 WUD	Contractor: Contract Harvesting Ltd	
Species: SS		Product: green logs	specification: 4.8 x 16	
Collection date: 10/06/2019		Delivery Date: 10/06/2019	Delivery Time: 3:40 pm	
Gross: 4.8 a2		Tare: 1.7 a0	Nett: 3.6 a2	
Received by:		A N Other		
 1 A : Pinales 4		Plant Passport-PZ 2 ZP- a8, a10, a12 3 B: GBFC000 5		
		C: 123456 6		
		D: GB 7		
		 8 Plant passport		

Original to be returned to the above address
 Deliveries are made on the terms outlined in the Woodlands Management Ltd CONDITIONS OF TIMBER SALE

 1 Plant Passport — PZ 2 ZP- a8, a10, a12 3	
A Pinales 4	
B GB – FC000 5	
C free text to include traceability code of wood, wood product or bark 6	
D GB 7	
 8 Plant passport	

Figure 1 **Plant Passport incorporated into a delivery advice note for moving Plant Health forestry regulated material within GB**

Figure 2 **Plant Passport not incorporated into a delivery advice note for moving Plant Health forestry regulated material within GB**

- 7** The two-letter code of the Member State of origin, ie GB is used for UK.
- 8** As an example but not necessary at present, a QR code is shown which can support the trial of electronic passports which are not permitted at present. QR codes can also be used to supplement the traceability code.

Continued from p14

awareness of biosecurity threats posed by quarantine pests such as the larger European eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*), an outbreak of which is currently undergoing eradication in southern England.

Introducing plant passports for movement of forestry regulated material will enable the UK to retain Protected Zone status for conifer bark beetles and other known and emerging pests. This will help to both ensure that the UK protects its commercial and conservation interests in forests and woodlands and continues to export material to other EU protected zones.

Implementation

How the Plant Health and Official Controls Regulations will be put in place will be dependent on the UK's future relationship with the EU. Further details regarding these regulations will be made available in due course.

In establishing the regulations, it was recognised that registered operators would need time to adapt existing systems to meet the new requirements. As such, the Plant Health Regulation was introduced in December 2017, and registered operators were given two years to implement all necessary changes to ensure they meet the requirements.

The format of plant passports was identified as a key area of concern (see panel p14/15). The development of EU tertiary legislation setting out the details of the new format was made a priority and the new format is now available.

Negotiations are ongoing to develop detailed legislation for other aspects of the plant passport requirements, and the Forestry Commission will continue to liaise with the working group to ensure the sector is prepared.

INFO

Contact plant.health@forestrycommission.gov.uk for more information about plant passporting for timber movements.

Brexit and EU Timber Regulations

While the destination of the Brexit rollercoaster remains unclear, there are a number of issues impacting UK forestry businesses which require a little consideration. One of them is the European Union Timber Regulations or EUTR for short. The Regulations came into force on 3 March 2013 and aim to reduce illegal logging by ensuring that no illegal timber or timber products can be sold in the EU.

EUTR prohibits operators in Europe from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market. 'Legal' timber is defined as timber produced in compliance with the laws of the country where it is harvested.

The regulation applies to timber and a wide range of timber products, including pulp and paper. It sets out a number of requirements for operators in Europe that place timber or timber products on the EU market for the first time.

EU operators - those who place timber products on the EU market for the first time - are required to exercise 'due diligence'.

Traders - those who buy or sell timber and timber products already on the market - are required to keep

information about their suppliers and customers to make timber easily traceable.

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal (or potentially even with a deal) then the UK could become a third country. Companies in the UK who are currently Traders could need to become Operators. This could impact companies who export timber from the west coast of Scotland to Ireland, or who move forest products across the UK border on the island of Ireland.

About 80% of UK timber is harvested from forests that have FSC and PEFC certification, so a combination of Chain of Custody and Felling Licences should go a long way towards satisfying the EUTR requirements for due diligence.

In addition, UK businesses who import timber products from the European Union, who are not currently required to undertake due diligence, but need to do so to comply with EUTR.

The Office for Product Safety & Standards which is responsible for EUTR compliance in the UK is delivering a series of workshops to help companies prepare in case of this eventuality. For more information contact andrew@confor.org.uk

