

Electronic Sanitary Certification for Animal Products: Opportunities and Challenges

WTO SPS Electronic Certification Advisory Committee (ECAC)

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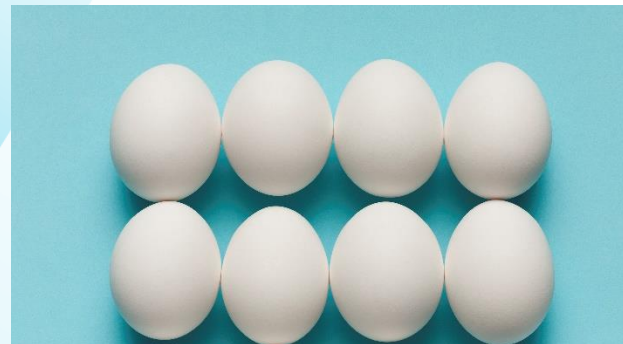
Agro-Food Trade and Markets
Trade and Agriculture Directorate



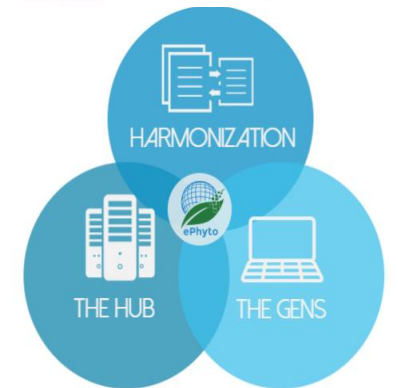
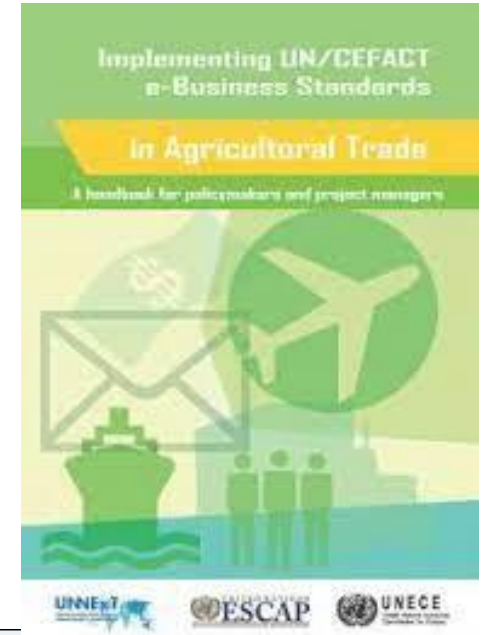
Key issues

Why is SPS electronic certification growing faster for plant than for animal products?

What can be done to address this?



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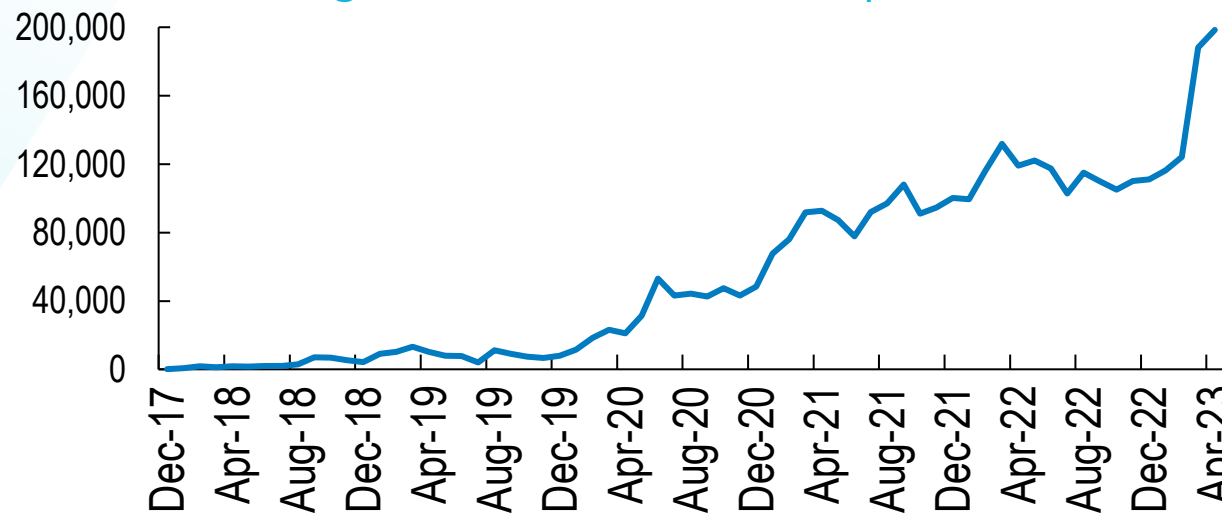




SPS e-certification has accelerated

- Many countries established time-limited SPS exceptions including acceptance of e-documentation during COVID ([see Annex A of the paper](#))
- Exchange of e-Phytos have grown with the establishment of the e-Phyto solution

Number of ePhyto certificates exchanges through IPPC's Hub, Dec 2017-Apr 2023



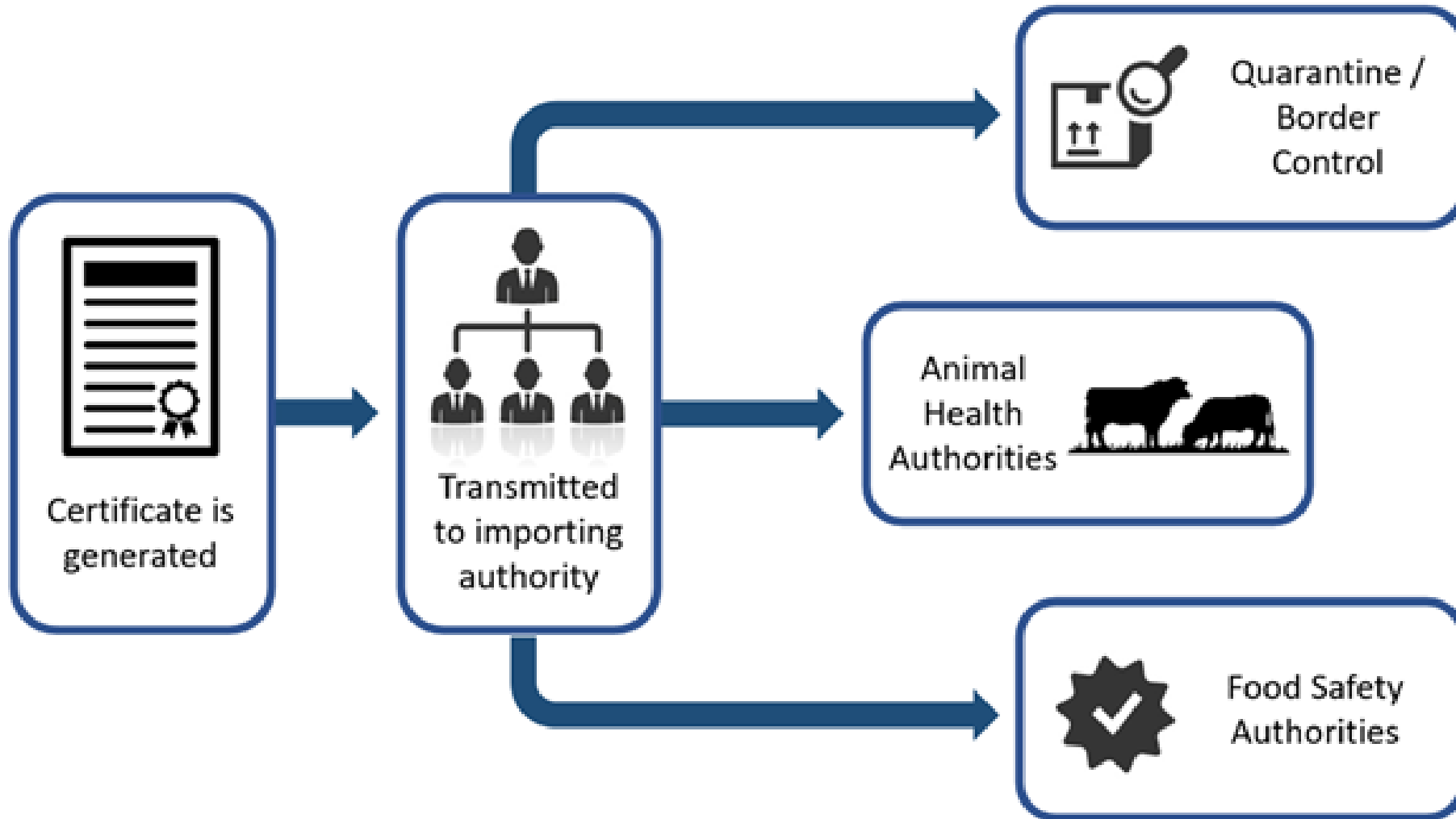
Since 2017, 3.7 million certificates have been exchanged in total

As of May 2023, 130 countries are connected to the ePhyto Hub, and 76 countries are exchanging more than 188 000 ePhyto certificates per month

Source: IPPC's www.ephytoexchange.org



Certification process for animal products





Differences between phyto- and sanitary-certification systems

Products of animal origin	Products of plant origin
Two distinct authorities (veterinary/animal health and public health) regulate	A single plant protection authority (normally within the Ministry of Agriculture) regulates
Pests/diseases of animals present risks to human health and safety	Plant pests may have significant implications for the human population but generally do not infect/cause disease in humans
WOAH and Codex have produced standard certificates for various commodities	There is one <u>IPPC standard</u> phyto certificate for export and one for re-export
WOAH lists <u>117 diseases/pests</u> and specific measures to manage individual risks	IPPC defines <u>regulated pests</u> and recommends risk management measures generically



International standards relevant to e-certification

- **IPPC**
 - [Guidelines on e-phyto certification ISPM 12 \(2017\)](#)
 - [IPPC ePhyto Solution \(2018\)](#)
- **Codex Alimentarius Commission**
 - Revised guidelines on certification ([CXG 38-2001](#)) adopted in 2021 – Annex II
- **WOAH**
 - Will update Chapter 5.2 of the [Terrestrial](#) and [Aquatic](#) Codes to align with Codex



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State of play for e-sanitary certification

Country / Organisation	Sending e-sanitary certificates?	Receiving e-sanitary certificates?
Australia	Yes	Yes
Brazil	Testing phase	No
Canada	No	Yes
Chile	Yes	Testing phase
Costa Rica	No	Yes
European Union	Yes	Yes
Japan	No	Yes
Korea	No	Yes
The Netherlands	Yes	Yes
New Zealand	Yes	Yes
Singapore	Testing phase	Testing phase
United Kingdom	No	Yes
United States	Yes	Yes



Different channels exist to send e-certs

- Harmonisation: with SPS standards and also with standards for digital business and trade
- E-certification systems are based on data models
 - UN/CEFACT Reference Data Model '[e-CERT](#)'
 - [World Customs Organization \(WCO\) Data Model](#)
- Interoperability of UN/CEFACT and the WCO system/Single Window environment



Challenges for implementing e-sanitary certification

- Technology and infrastructure
- People and culture
- Coordination and cooperation (G-G, G-B, B-B)
- Legal framework enables the use of digital technology
- Long term financial support
- International standards
- Experience with trade – both government and business



Actions for national governments

- Consider adopting or increasing the use of e-sanitary certification
- Simplify certification requirements - recognising equivalence
- Update national SPS legislation to allow the use of e-cert and promote cooperation between SPS Authorities
- Encourage greater private sector participation in the development of e-cert
- Exchange information and experience on e-cert with trading partners (i.e. [OECD organized workshop Feb 2022](#))
- Contribute to studies analysing the trade impacts of e-cert



Actions for international and regional organisations

- Consider a pilot study to investigate the feasibility of using the ePhyto solution to exchange e-sanitary
- Continue efforts to raise awareness and promote sharing of information on experiences with e-sanitary
- Consider the development of more targeted mechanisms to promote education and awareness i.e. via detailed case studies and best practices
- ISSBs harmonise approaches to implement e-certification



Recently published research

agriculture policy brief

Digital tools to facilitate SPS market access April 2023

3 Countries increasingly use digital technologies within their sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) systems, including SPS electronic certification for certified products.

3 The OECD's quantitative analysis shows that the use of e-certificates has had positive effects on trade volumes, notably for processed food, vegetables, and animal products.

3 While progress has been made in the adoption of electronic phytosanitary certificates for the international trade in plants and plant-based products, the implementation of electronic sanitary certificates for trade in animal products is more complex and challenging. This is due in part to the different approaches to e-certification being taken by internationally recognised SPS standards setting bodies and to the risks associated with trade in animal products.

3 Significant challenges remain in increasing the uptake of digital technologies in agro-food trade, including the need to improve the regulatory environment to facilitate the adoption of digital tools. The successful expansion of digital tools requires careful planning and long-term investment, as well as the sharing of expertise. Targeted financial assistance and capacity building can support countries that currently lack the capabilities to adopt these tools.

What's the issue?

Digital technologies are increasingly implemented by countries within their SPS systems. The challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic motivated countries to adopt digital SPS systems more widely, including the development of e-certificates for the management of plants, animals and animal products, and the introduction of SPS e-certificates in the movement of products. The challenges related to the use of e-certificates, including technical, regulatory and supply chain integrity challenges, remain and countries, regional bodies, and advanced economies need to think:

Coordinate cross activities in SPS compliance certificate processes. This involves trade in licensing, administrative costs for countries and traders. They can also consider the use of trade facilitation programmes, such as the e-certificates for business, and help governments to reduce regulatory costs and trade barriers.

Exchange of e-certificates has made in plant and animal products have been growing, between 2012 and 2018.

Using SPS e-certificates has positive effects on trade volumes, notably for processed food, vegetables and animal products. However, the effects on trade volumes are not statistically significant. Countries need to consider that e-certificates can lead to an increase in trade volume, notably in animal products, vegetables and processed food, which represents an increase in the total value of exports by 1.6%, 1.4% and 1.9% respectively, but also an increase in the number of e-certificates (Figure 7).

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ELECTRONIC SANITARY CERTIFICATES FOR TRADE IN ANIMAL PRODUCTS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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