



agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
ON
OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATION OF
REGULATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
IN TERMS OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT
STANDARDS ACT, 1990 (ACT No. 119 OF 1990)**

This SOP will be effective as from September 2020

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) ON OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATION OF REGULATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN TERMS OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT, 1990 (ACT NO 119 OF 1990)

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1. OBJECTIVE

To ensure the authenticity and validity of official export certificates issued in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards (the Act) Act No. 119 of 1990 for regulated agricultural products of plant origin.

2. SCOPE

This SOP is applicable in circumstances where the use of paper (manual) and paperless (electronic) certification is carried out for export approval as prescribed under the Act.

3. DEFINITIONS

Where used with regard to certificates -

"addendum" means a supplementary document that summarizes the details of all the applicable consignment notes and must be verified by the assignee;

"assignee" means a person, undertaking, body, institution, association, or board designated as such under section 2(3);

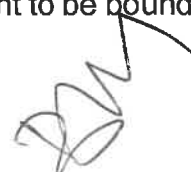
"certificates" means an official export certificate that may be issued/generated either in paper format (including electronically prepared) or in a verified electronic format which describe and attest to conformity of a consignment of regulated agricultural products to stipulated requirements;

"certifying officer" means a qualified *inspector/assessor* of a designated assignee authorized in writing by the Chief Executive Officer of the assignee or the executive officer;

"code standardisation" means a common Information and Communication Technology (ICT) language that is representative of the explanatory notes relating to the certification of the consignment which will be made known to the value chain stakeholders;

"competent authority" means an officer designated as the executive officer under section 2(1) of the Act who is responsible for the authorisation and management of certification;

"digital electronic signature" means data in an electronic form which is attached to or logically associated with other data in electronic form and which is used by the signatory to sign. It captures the signatory's intent to be bound by the contents of the signed document;



“electronic certificate” means a representation of the wording and data describing and attesting to attributes of a consignment of agricultural product destined for international trade, transmitted by authenticated and secure electronic means from the exporting country authority to the importing country authority;

“Executive Officer” means the officer designated under section 2(1) of the Act;

“Information and Communication Technology service providers” means official and/or relevant service providers or assignee that are involved with enabling the food business operator to comply with electronic certification;

“logistic companies” means all relevant companies or institutions that are involved directly or indirectly in the advancement of certification of regulated agricultural products;

“the Act” means the Agricultural Product Standards Act No 119 of 1990;

“unique certificate number” means a pre-printed number that is found on the security paper of the certificate; and

“Value Chain Stakeholders” means a group of individuals drawn from the ICT vendors, government institution, grower’s associations, assignee, logistic companies, laboratories and other relevant stakeholders whose main focus is to develop and standardise data in order to ensure that a common ICT language is established.

4. REFERENCE TO REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 Agricultural Product Standards Act No.119 of 1990 and the relevant subordinate legislation.
- 4.2 Guidelines concerning Quality Control Operations for produce exported under the OECD Scheme for the application of International Standards for fruit and vegetables – C(99) 10/final.
- 4.3 Codex Guidelines for Generic Official Certificate formats and the production and issuance of certificates - CAC/GL 38-2001.
- 4.4 Codex Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification – CAC/GL 20-1995.

- 4.5 Codex guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems – CAC/GL 26-1997.
- 4.6 Commission Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 of 12 June 2001 on checks on conformity to the marketing standards applicable to fresh fruit and vegetables, as amended.
- 4.7 Commission Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 on General Food Law.
- 4.8 The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

5. GENERAL RULES

- 5.1 All role-players must ensure the validity and authenticity of the certification process in terms of the Act.
- 5.2 Manual certificates shall be issued **prior** to the consignments, to which the certificate relates, leaving control of the assignee or executive officer. Except that --
 - (a) in the case of conventional and containerised export of fresh fruit and vegetables to countries other than Japan, Korea and the United States of America certificates may be issued up to 5 days after the vessel has sailed.
 - (b) in the case of exports by air the certificate shall be issued at least two hours before the consignment leaves the premises of the freight agent.
- 5.3 Paperless certificates shall be generated once all critical information has been received.
- 5.4 Each certificate shall at least have:
 - (a) a **unique certificate number/code**. This certificate number/code must be printed on the certificate.
 - (b) a **period of validity**. The period for which the certificate will be valid as determined by the competent authority (40 days by sea and 10 days by air).
- 5.5. No changes or alterations may be effected on the manual/electronic prepared export certificate.



- 5.6 The initial date of inspection shall be used as the "Date of inspection". However, if several consignment notes are presented, the most aged date of the consignment note/s is considered to be the official date of inspection.
- 5.7 Costs of a new inspection shall be for the account of the client.
- 5.8 If export certification takes place other than at the final export point, the addendum must be stamped and signed off or digitally electronic approved by the local assignee office and may be faxed to the freight forwarding agent of the exporter. Replacements will only be handled at the office where the certificate has been signed or digitally electronic approved.
- 5.9 In complying with the integrity of the entire system, the assignee may issue the export certificate which precedes the issuance/generation of the phytosanitary certificate. Provided that the said certification process shall only be applicable to phytosanitary certificate issued/generated without additional declarations.
- 5.10 In case of re-routing, the exporter, producer or forwarding agent shall provide the inspector with the necessary information before such re-routing takes place: Provided that the consignment complies with requirements of that destination market.

6. FORMAT

- 6.1 The Directorate: Inspection Services(D: IS) shall be responsible to oversee and design certificates in consultation with the Executive Officer.
- 6.2 Certificates shall be designed in such a manner that it minimize or prevent the potential for occurrence of fraud. (Security paper only obtainable from the assignee.)
- 6.3 The format of all export certificates must be standardised and approved by the competent authority. As far as possible the format must also be in line with the international requirements. (Refer to Annexures 1 to 3.)
- 6.4 Where official forms are produced manually or electronically, the forms shall occupy one sheet of paper or, where more than one page is required, either in such a form that any two or more pages are part of an integrated whole and indivisible sheet of paper, or, where this is not possible, each individual sheet should be separately initialled and stamped by the certifying officer and numbered so as to indicate it is a particular page in a finite sequence (for example - page 2 of 4 pages).
- 6.5 The certificate shall be printed on the Department of Agriculture, Land reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) approved security paper in the format set out in Annexures 1 to 3, stamped and signed as stipulated in section 9.

- 6.6 The certificate shall be prepared and completed using a mechano-graphical or similar process.
- 6.7 The certificate shall have information as set out in Annexures 1 to 3.

7. ROLE-PLAYERS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Competent authority (Directorate: Inspection Services in consultation with the Executive Officer) shall --
- (a) take all necessary steps to ensure the integrity, impartiality and independence of the official certification system;
 - (b) responsible for any certificate it issues or authorizes to be issued and for the management of the exchange status of a paper or paperless certificate;
 - (c) the D: IS shall regularly audit the official recognised security systems on control measures;
 - (d) the D:IS shall have information and provide guidance notes to facilitate the correct completion of certificates which shall be available to all certifying officers and to parties responsible for providing details for the inclusion in a certificate;
 - (e) issue the assignee with uniquely numbered security paper (one original and one copy per serial number). The security paper shall be used for the preparation and production of official export certificates. The Competent Authority shall keep record of these unique numbers and be able to relate it to the distribution of the security paper.
 - (f) without prejudice to any legal proceedings or penalties, carry out investigations or checks and take appropriate measures to penalize any instances of false or misleading certification, which are brought to their attention. Such measures may include the temporary suspension of the certifying officer from his or her duties until the investigation is completed.
 - (g) the D: IS shall remain the ultimate custodian of standardized codes.

In particular, if it is found in the course of the investigation or checks that:

- (i) A certifying officer has knowingly issued a fraudulent or has altered an official certificate, the Competent Authority shall take all necessary steps to ensure that, as far as is possible, that the person concerned cannot repeat the offence.
- (ii) An individual or an undertaking/company has made fraudulent use of or has altered an official certificate, the Competent Authority shall take all necessary steps to ensure that, as far as possible, that the person or undertaking/ company concerned cannot repeat the

offence. Such measures may include a refusal subsequently to issue an official certificate to the person or undertaking/company concerned.

7.2 ASSIGNEE SHALL --

- (a) ensure that their procedures allow for the issuing of the official export certificates within 24 hours;
- (b) have in place an effective control system as agreed with the DALRRD to prevent the fraudulent use of security paper, official stamps and official certificates;
- (c) retain records of the unique identification numbers assigned to batches of security paper issued to them as well as of those distributed by them, also to companies for the electronic preparation of certificates;
- (d) be able to relate these identification numbers to the issuance of official export certificates and ensure that a copy of all certificates issued as well as cancelled certificates, is available for a period of at least three years;
- (e) designate in writing the inspectors/assessors as certifying officers and keep an updated list of names and signatures of all certifying officers and shall inform the competent Authority of any changes within three working days of leaving the Appointed Assignee employment office;
- (f) ensure that authorised certifying officers have a knowledge of the legislation with regards to the commodities to be certified and, in general, are informed of the rules to be followed for issuing the certificates.

7.3 CERTIFYING OFFICER SHALL --

- (a) be fully conversant with the requirements of the regulations and standards and requirements that he/she is attesting to certify on the official export certificate;
- (b) have access to a copy of the regulations or standards and requirements that are referred to on the official export certificate;
- (c) have no conflict of interest in the commercial aspects of the consignment and be independent from the commercial parties involved;
- (d) only certify products which are within his/her knowledge (or which have been separately attested to by another certifying officer); and
- (e) only certify in respect of the circumstances known at the time of signing or digitally electronic approving the official export certificate.



8. MEETING: STANDARDIZATION OF CODES FOR USE BY VALUE CHAIN STAKEHOLDERS

- (a). The code standardization shall be carried out under the supervision of the D: IS.
- (b). The Secretariat service shall be on a rotational base between the Directorate: Food Safety and Quality Assurance (D:FSQA) and D: IS.
- (c). At all material times, the assignee shall oversee the proceeding of the code standardization value chain meetings.
- (d). Meetings shall be held quarterly or as and when the need arise, on a venue decided in consultation with the Chairperson (assignee).
- (e). The Value Chain Stakeholders shall comprise of Growers Associations, Exporters, Forwarding Agents, Logistic companies, ICT vendors, laboratories, DALRRD, assignee and any other relevant stakeholders.

9. CONDITIONS UPON WHICH CERTAIN FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS ARE SELECTED FOR AUDITING OF CONSIGNMENT NOTES FOR EXPORT CERTIFICATION PURPOSES

- 9.1 Certain exporters/forwarding agents are accredited to an audit process that assures compliance to the integrity of their export information in terms that the product has been inspected and approved by the assignee at a verified date. The audit process means that the certifying officer of the assignee shall make at random sample pick of the consignment notes or even all consignment notes listed on the addendum for submission to the completeness of the audit process. In practice, exporters/freight agents are to complete addendums and fax/forward it through to the assignee office at the final export point for the certifying officer to choose the consignment notes required for the audit process. These choices of consignment notes have to accompany the application of the applicant's submission for export certification.
- 9.2 The following criteria shall further be used by the certifying officer in carrying out the audit procedure:
- (a) The qualifying exporters / forwarding agents must process more than 5 million containers of fruit and vegetables in a season.
 - (b) An affidavit must be submitted stating that addendums are system generated and cannot be tampered with. (The assignee will audit the systems of exporters / forwarding agents for compliance).
 - (c) If the addendum is not system generated then the certifying officer will indicate the rows on the addendum with each application for audit purposes. This scenario does not require an affidavit.



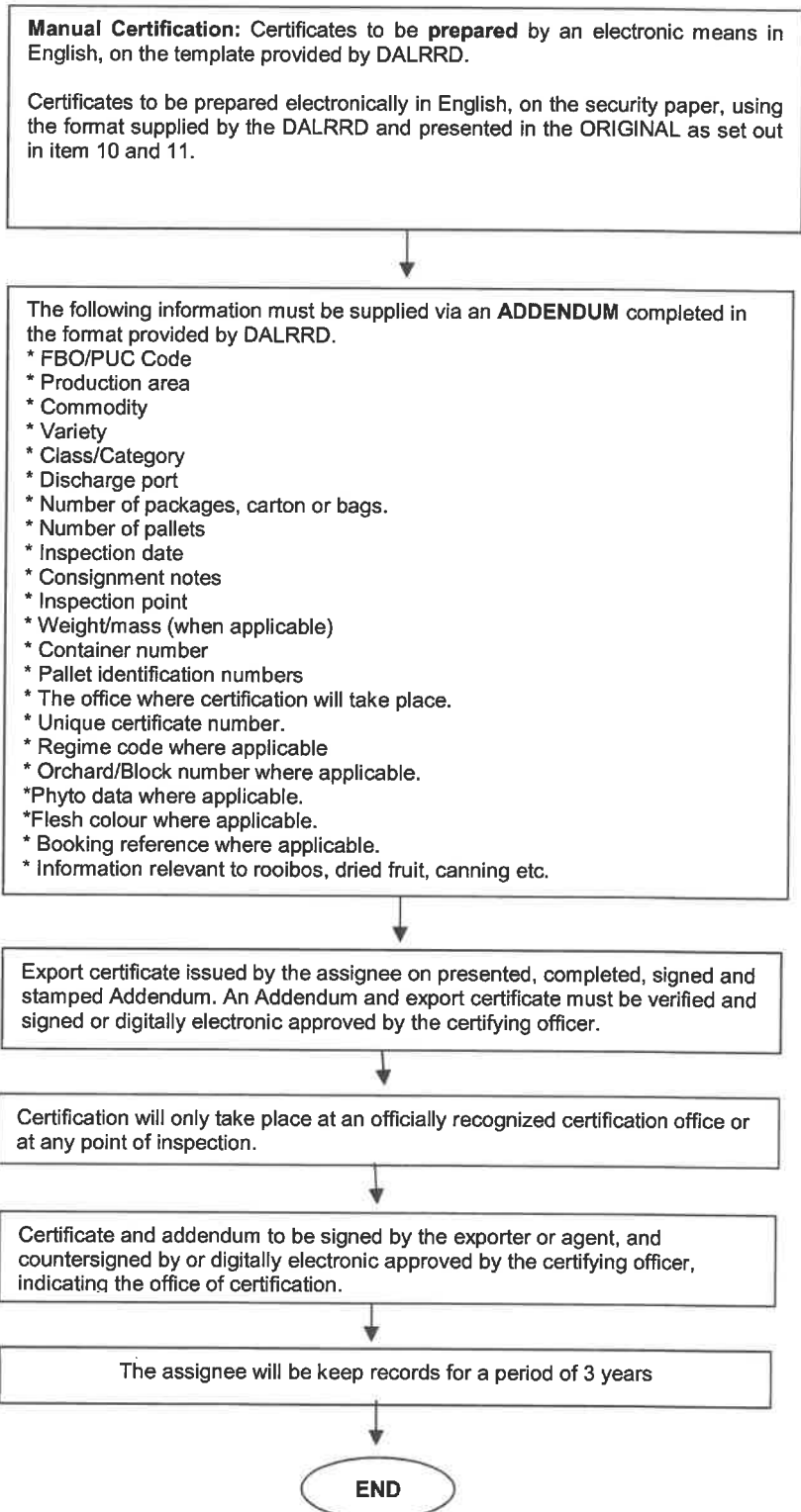
- (f) The assignee will issue a standard instruction to exporters / forwarding agents, indicating documents needed for a specific pallet which is pre-determined page and rows on the addendum.
- (g) A minimum of 3 consignment notes must be submitted for each single container per addendum. e.g. line/row 4, line/row 10 and line/row 17.
- (h) A minimum of 1 consignment note must be submitted per container for multiple containers per addendum e.g. line/row 7 per container.
- (i) Full verification of all orchards on the addendum regarding the alert list, blacklist, withdrawal list, orchard registration, special market registration and target market for containers and conventional shipping.
- (j) A minimum of 3 consignment notes must be submitted per container, per addendum in the case of citrus from Citrus Black Spot(CBS) regions. (Destined for European Union/Iran/Reunion/Japan and other CBS free markets).
- (k) A minimum of 3 consignment notes must be submitted per container in the case of special and differentiated markets e.g. Canada, Indonesia, and Malaysia etc.
- (j) A minimum of 1 consignment note per 30 pallets must be submitted for conventional shipping (to the EU and other CBS free markets) as well as for special and differentiated markets.
- (k) A minimum of 1 consignment note per 50 pallets (2%) must be submitted for conventional shipping for deciduous fruit and citrus to CBS acceptable markets.
- (l) The participation in the audit system will be revoked and full verification will be applied in the case of any irregularities.

10. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COMPLETION OF CERTIFICATES

- 10.1 Certificates shall always be issued and presented to the exporter or his/her agent in the original. The original certificate should be uniquely identifiable and the status of the certificate whether it is the official original, an official copy or duplicate should be clear e.g. marked "original", or "copy" or "duplicate". NOTE Copy does not refer to photocopy. Please refer to the below flow diagram.



Export Certification Process Flow Diagram



- 10.2 A copy of each of the issued certificates as well as in the case of cancelled and lost certificates, both the official original and official copy certificates shall always be kept by the assignee, unless an affidavit can be provided by the exporter.
- 10.3 In case of manual certificates, both the original and the copy shall be **signed and stamped in the original**. The certifying officer shall sign the certificate **only in blue ink**.
- 10.4 **No corrections or alterations may be made to any certificate**. If corrections (due to mistakes made during the preparation of the certificate) need to be made to a certificate **before** it is signed or digitally electronic approved, the faulty draft certificate should be cancelled and handed back to the officer who issued the company with the security paper. Such a faulty draft certificate shall be cancelled by drawing a line and writing the word "**Cancelled**" in letters of at least in 20 mm in indelible ink across the certificate (from the left bottom corner to the right top corner of the certificate).
- 10.5 When signing a certificate, the certifying officer shall ensure that—
- (a) the certificate contains **no deletions** other than those required by the text of the certificate;
 - (b) **no alterations** are made to the certified information;
 - (c) he/she has signed in blue ink and stamped in red/blue colour of ink;
 - (d) the certificate bears the date on which the certificate was signed and issued;
 - (e) no portion of the certificate is left blank in a manner that would allow it to be completed by any person other than the certifying officer (All blank spaces must be struck out or deleted by the assessor who signs the certificate.); and
 - (f) all information on the certificate is correct.

11. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COMPLETION OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES

- 11.1 Only exporters or agents that have registered and have been approved on the electronic system shall be able to submit electronic export certificate application. The exporter or agent shall submit an export certificate application which has pallet information.
- 11.2 The pallet information will be electronically validated against the electronic system to ensure compliance to export requirements.
- 11.3 If the export certificate application has passed all business validations, an export certificate shall be created as set up in Annexure 1 to 3.



- 11.4 A certifying officer shall assess the format of the certificate in order to determine whether or not the certificate can be issued.
- 11.5 The certifying officer shall print the certificate on a security paper provided by DALRRD. The certifying officer shall stamp and sign both the original and the copy of the certificate as stipulated in section 10.
- 11.6 The exporter or his/her agent shall collect the certificate and sign as proof of collection. Addendum will still be available for printing and signing if needed.
- 11.7 The assignee shall keep a record of all electronic certificates application for traceability and auditing purpose.

12. REPLACEMENT OF CERTIFICATES

- 12.1 The exporter or his/her agent shall provide the certifying officer with an affidavit setting out circumstances that led to the addition or change of the certificate.
- 12.2 Upon consideration of the affidavit, the certifying officer shall then look at the initial certificate and draw a line with the word "Cancelled".
- 12.3 A replacement certificate shall be issued with the wording "REPLACEMENT".
- 12.4 An additional fee will be charged for the issuing of the replacement certificate.

13. REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATES

Where there is reasonable grounds of suspicion, the certifying officer may revoke the original certificate as soon as possible and notify the exporter or his/her agent in writing by fax or by electronic means. Such notice shall contain all the relevant information regarding the consignment and the reasons for the revocation. A copy of the revocation may be provided to the appropriate food control authority of the importing country if the export of the consignment has occurred.

14. REVIEW DATE

This SOP is subject to an annual review by the management of the D: FSQA or when legislation necessitates it.

AMENDMENT RECORD


Amendment No.	Entered by:	Date:
1	E. van Rensburg/C. Julius	07/04/2003
2	H. Wessels/M. Mutengwe	15/04/2008
3.	B. Makhafola/ M Mosome	09/01/2013
4	B. Makhafola/T Chipane	09/01/2015
5	B. Makhafola/ T. Tshipana/ M.T. Mutengwe	21/09/2020

15. DISTRIBUTION

Copies of this SOP will be distributed to all interested parties by the Secretariat upon request. Alternatively it will also be available on the DALRRD's intranet and on the Web Page: www.dalrrd.gov.za.

16. ENDORSEMENT

This SOP has been approved and endorsed by the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards.



Mr. B.M. MAKHAFOLA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS



**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT
OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATE FOR CEREALS
AND CEREAL PRODUCTS
ANNEXURE 1**

APS02

1. Trader/ Exporter's name:				Serial Number:			
2. Packer/production unit code identified on packaging (if other than trader)				3. Official authority/Competent authority: Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development			
				Inspection body: Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB), designated by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development as an Assignee			
				4. Country of origin: Republic of South Africa		5. Country of destination:	
6. Means of Transport:		<input type="checkbox"/> AIR	<input type="checkbox"/> SEA	<input type="checkbox"/> ROAD	7. National regulations: Issued in terms of the regulations regarding control of the export of certain products, published under section 15 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990)		
Vessel and Voyage number:							
9. Packages (number and type)		10. Type of product (variety if the standard specifies)		11. Grade/description		12. Total weight in kg gross/net	
13. Condition of bags:							
14. This is to certify that samples of the products specified herein have been inspected and, at the time of inspection complied with the standards and requirements specified in terms of section 4(3) of the Agricultural Product Standards Act. Customs office foreseen: entry							
15. Period of validity days: 40 days by Sea or Land and 10 days by Air							
Inspection Stamp				Date of Issue:			
				Place of Issue:			
				Inspector:			
				Signature:			
16. Comments/observations:							

" Any person who alters this certificate or makes a document or causes a document to be made which purports to be this certificate shall be guilty of an offence in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards Act"

APS03



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT
STANDARDS ACT
OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATE
ANNEXURE 2

1. Trader/ Exporter's name:				Serial Number:		
2. Packer/production unit code identified on packaging (if other than trader)			3. Official authority/Competent authority: Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development			
			Inspection body: Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB), designated by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development as an Assignee			
			4. Country of origin Republic of South Africa			5. Country of destination
6. Means of Transport:		AIR	SEA	ROAD	7. National regulations: Issued in terms of the regulations regarding control of the export of certain products, published under section 15 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990)	
Vessel: Container numbers:						
8. Packages (number and type)		9. Type of product (variety if the standard specifies)		10. Quality class		11. Total weight in kg gross/net
12. This is to certify that samples of the products specified herein have been inspected and, at the time of inspection complied with the standards and requirements specified in terms of section 4(3) of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990.						
..... Customs office foreseen: entry						
13. Period of validity days: 40 days by Sea or Land and 10 days by Air						
Inspection Stamp				Date of Issue:		
				Place of Issue:		
				Inspector:		
				Signature:		
14. Comments/observations:						

" Any person who alters this certificate or makes a document or causes a document to be made which purports to be this certificate shall be guilty of an offence in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards Act "



**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT
OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATE FOR FROZEN
AND CANNED FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
ANNEXURE 3**

APS04

1. Trader /Exporter's name:		AIR	SEA	ROAD
2. Means of Transport:				
Vessel:				
Container numbers:				
4. Country of origin: Republic of South Africa		5. Country of destination:		
Shipping mark	Product and code marks	Packaging		
		Nett mass per container	Number of containers per package	
6. National regulations: Issued in terms of the regulations regarding control of the export of certain products, published under section 15 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act 119 of 1990)				
		Grade	Grade	Grade
		Number of packages	Number of packages	Number of packages
		Mass (kg's)	Mass (kg's)	Mass (kg's)
7. This is to certify that samples of the products specified herein have been inspected and, at the time of inspection complied with the standards and requirements specified in terms of section 4(3) of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990.				
..... Customs office foreseen: entry				
8. Period of validity days: 40 days by sea or land and 10 days by air				
Inspection Stamp				
Date of Issue:		Place of Issue:		
Inspector:		Signature:		
9. Comments/observations:				

By

DOC. NO. 05	REV. NO. 05	ISSUE DATE 2020	DOC. STATUS Approved
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