

Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangements

Plant Biosecurity Operations, Orange

What is Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA)?

Interstate Certification Assurance or ICA is a national accreditation scheme based upon quality assurance principles that accredits a business to operate an ICA Arrangement and issue their own Plant Health Assurance Certificates (PHACs) for exporting produce to other States.

These PHACs issued by ICA accredited businesses have the same legal force/value as Plant Health Certificates (PHCs) issued by State government Inspectors.

Applying

Who may apply for accreditation?

An application must be made by the **legal entity** which owns and operates the business to be covered by the ICA Arrangement. The following legal entities may be accredited for an ICA Arrangement;

- Individuals
- Incorporated companies; and
- Registered Co-operative Associations

In the case of partnerships, an application can be made but will need to be signed by each of the partners OR one partner applies to be accredited as an individual with the other partners listed as Authorised Signatories.

In the case of trusts, an application must be made by the trustee NOT the trust.

Companies must provide their Australian Company Number (ACN) or Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN) and attached a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation. Co-operative associations must provide appropriate proof of registration (i.e. copy of the Certificate of Registration or Registration search from the Officer of Consumer and Business Affairs).

When should I apply?

An application should be made **at least 10 working days** prior to the date on which you intend to commence certifying produce under the ICA Arrangement.

A separate application must be made for each ICA Arrangement (one Operational Procedure at one facility per application).

Where do I send the application form?

ICA scheme information and current Operational Procedures and application forms are available from Plant Biosecurity, NSW Department of Primary Industries

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/ica

Completed applications or requests for further information should be forwarded to:

ICA Records Management Officer
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800

Phone 02 6391 3732 Fax 02 6391 3206

Audit and accreditation

Desk audit

When your application is received it will be reviewed by the ICA Records Management Officer or a Plant Biosecurity Officer to ensure it is complete and correct. You will be advised should additional information or clarification be required.

Initial (on-site) audit

After your application has been accepted, a departmental compliance officer will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to carry out an **initial on-site audit** of your ICA system.

The initial audit is carried out to ensure that the system described in your application is

implemented and capable of operating in accordance with the Operational Procedure referenced in your application. Also that the system implemented is effective in ensuring compliance with the specified requirements of the ICA arrangement.

On completion of a successful initial audit, applicants will be granted "Provisional Accreditation" and provided a Certificate of Accreditation and (where required) a book of PHACs.

Additional books of 100 PHACs are available from the ICA Records Management Officer.

Compliance audits

Within four (4) weeks of a successful initial audit and accreditation of the business, a departmental compliance officer will contact the business to arrange a **compliance audit** to verify that the ICA system continues to operate in accordance with the documented procedures.

On completion of a successful compliance audit, annual accreditation for the current season will be granted (up to a maximum of twelve months from the date of provisional accreditation). On-going scheduled compliance audits will be carried out at defined intervals dependent on the Operational Procedure under which the business is accredited.

Random audits

Random audits will be conducted on a number of accredited businesses annually. This may take the form of a full compliance audit, or audits of limited scope to sample chemical treatments, certificates, ICA records or documentation.

Investigatory audits

Un-scheduled compliance audits may be carried out to investigate reported or suspected non-conformance by an accredited business.

Re-accreditation

The business is required to re-apply for accreditation each year the business seeks to operate under the ICA arrangement. Businesses seeking re-accreditation must lodge a renewal application prior to accreditation lapsing, or if accreditation has lapsed, prior to commencing further certification of produce under the ICA arrangement.

A business may not commence or continue certification of produce under an ICA arrangement unless it is in possession of a valid and current *Certificate of Accreditation for an ICA Arrangement* for the procedure,

produce type and chemical (if applicable) covered by the Assurance Certificate.

Audit fees & charges

The table below sets out the standard fees and charges by the Department the ICA scheme.

Fees & Charges	Cost (\$) inclusive of GST	Comments
Application fee	\$253.00	Non refundable
Desk audit	No fee charged	
Initial audit	\$130.00 per hour charged in 15 minute increments	At least 45 mins
Compliance audit	\$130.00 per hour charged in 15 minute increments	At least 45 mins
Travel time	\$130.00 per hour charged in 15 minute increments	Capped at 2.5 hours
Renewal fee	\$110.00	Annual fee
PHAC book (100 Certificates)	\$22.00	
Area Freedom Certificates for Source Property Accreditation	\$32.50	Per certificate

Random and investigatory audits are charged for at the above rate only from the time any non-conformance is identified. Additional charges apply for work carried out on weekends and public holidays

Non-conformance, suspension and cancellation of accreditation

Detection of a non-conformance

Detection of a non-conformance in produce or in the business's ICA system processes or procedures will result in an investigation by a departmental compliance officer to determine the cause.

The business will be advised in writing of the nature of the non-conformance, referencing (where appropriate) the relevant sections of the Operational Procedure and an agreed time-frame for completion of any corrective action needed to rectify the non-conformance and prevent reoccurrence.

Suspension and cancellation of accreditation

It is a condition of accreditation that the accredited person must implement and operate the ICA system in accordance with the Operational Procedure referenced in the application. Accreditation may therefore be suspended or cancelled for contravention of accreditation conditions including failure to pay fees.

Failure to comply with the Operational Procedure may constitute grounds for suspension or cancellation of the accreditation.

Reconsiderations

A business which has had its accreditation refused, suspended or cancelled may lodge an application for reconsideration of the decision setting out the grounds for reconsideration.

Applications for reconsideration should be sent to:

Strategy Leader Plant Biosecurity Operations
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW 2800

A business which has had certified produce refused entry by an importing State or Territory authority should initially contact the Regulatory Compliance Manager on 02 6391 3384.

Amendments to accreditation details

Should your details change during the accreditation period, such as your postal address or contact numbers, or should you wish to change the persons listed as Authorised Signatories for the ICA arrangement, you should complete a new application form with the amendment box ticked and amended particulars and post it to ICA Records Management Officer, details as per page 1.

Offences

The commission of an offence against the *Plant Diseases Act 1924* are grounds for suspension or cancellation of the accreditation.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2011). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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