



Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin

IHS.FERTGRO

2 October 2018

TITLE

Import Health Standard: Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin

COMMENCEMENT

This Import Health Standard comes into force on the date of issue.

REVOCATION

This Import Health Standard revokes and replaces Import Health Standard: MPI.STD.FERTGRO: Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin, dated 31 May 2017.

ISSUING AUTHORITY

This Import Health Standard is issued under section 24A of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Dated at Wellington this 2nd day of October 2018

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Ministry for Primary Industries
(acting under delegated authority of the Director-General)

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of the Import Health Standard (IHS), but is intended to indicate its general effect.

Purpose

This IHS specifies the requirements for the importation of fertilisers and growing media of plant origin from all countries, to manage the biosecurity risks which may be associated with these goods.

Background

The New Zealand Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) provides the legal basis for effectively managing the import of risk goods.

Import health standards (IHS), issued under the Act, specify requirements to be met for the effective management of imported risk goods that may pose a biosecurity threat to New Zealand. IHS include requirements that must be met in the exporting country, during transit and importation and post clearance, if specified, before biosecurity clearance can be given.

Who should read this Import Health Standard?

This IHS applies to importers of products of plant origin to be used as fertilisers and growing media into New Zealand from all countries, and outlines the import requirements.

Why is this important?

Importers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the goods comply with this IHS (section 16B of the Act).

Goods that do not meet the import requirements described in this IHS will not be provided with biosecurity clearance. The importer will be given the option to treat, reship or destroy the consignment.

Equivalence

The Chief Technical Officer (CTO) may approve measures different from those set out in this IHS which can be applied to effectively manage risks associated with the importation of these goods.

Equivalence will be considered with reference to the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures 24 (ISPM 24).

Other information

This is not an exhaustive list of compliance requirements. It is the importer's responsibility to be familiar with and comply with all New Zealand laws. Other legislation which may be relevant to the importation of fertilisers and growing media of plant origin is identified below:

Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act (1997)

If a product makes a claim to act as a pesticide, fertiliser, or to have medicinal properties, the product must comply with the relevant requirements of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act (1997).

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act (1996)

If a product includes microorganisms which may be subject to a Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) approval, the product must comply with the relevant requirements of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act (1996).

Other Import Health Standards

Requirements for importation of plant products or by-products of processed plant products that are intended to be used for animal feeds are prescribed in the IHS: BNZ-PAFP-IMPRT: *Importation into New Zealand of Processed Animal Feeds of Plant Origin*.

Requirements for importation of mats and fibres derived from plants, for multiple uses (other than fertilisers, growing media, or bioremediation products) are prescribed in the IHS: MPI.STD.PLANTMATERIAL: *Dried and Preserved Plant Material, and Fresh Plant Material for Testing, Analysis or Research*.

Fertilisers, growing media, or bioremediation products which include products of animal origin must also meet the requirements of the relevant animal products IHS.

Manufactured inorganic fertilisers and growing media not containing any plant material and/or microorganisms are not included under this IHS. Bulk imports of inorganic fertilisers are covered under the IHS: INORGFERTALL: *Import Health Standard for Bulk Inorganic Fertiliser (including Guano Fertiliser, Perlite, Vermiculite, and Rockwool)*.

Note: Additional information to the requirements is included in guidance text boxes.

Part 1: General Requirements

1.1 Application

- (1) This Import Health Standard (IHS) applies to the following fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products being imported into New Zealand from all countries, unless specific country restrictions apply, as identified in Part 2: *Specific Requirements*.
- a) processed fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products that have been produced:
 - i) by the decomposition of fresh or dry plant material;
 - ii) by processing dried plant material;
 - iii) from by-products of processed plant products, including but not limited to: oil seed meals (e.g. copra meal, cotton seed meal, mustard meal, neem meal, palm kernel meal, soybean meal and distillers dried grains), cotton delinting by-product, husks and ground nut shells.
 - b) manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products in granular, powder, fibrous or liquid form derived from organic plant material;
 - c) manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products containing microorganisms;
 - d) coco peat products, including but not limited to:
 - i) coco peat products for use as growing media in various grades and finished products for horticultural/agricultural use (e.g. grow slabs, grow bags, bales, blocks, discs, pots, starter cubes and small blocks);
 - ii) 'chips' and 'crush' derived from the whole chopped and crushed husk pieces;
 - iii) compressed or non-compressed product.
 - e) processed peat products sterilised during manufacture (e.g. peat pots, plugs and pellets);
 - f) raw peat that has been excavated from peat bogs or at depth;
 - g) peat as a packing material (e.g. peat used as a packaging material for imported bulbs).

Guidance

- Growing media associated with imported nursery stock is out of scope of this IHS.
- There are no biosecurity requirements for coir fibre products made from large coir fibres for a variety of uses (e.g. mattress matting, basket liners, erosion and weed control matting, fibre blankets, domestic mats, brushes and fillers for industrial uses, clean coir twine or fibre rolls).

1.2 Incorporation of material by reference

- (1) The following documents are incorporated by reference under section 142M of the Act:
- a) [ISPM 5. 2017. Glossary of phytosanitary terms. Rome, IPPC, FAO;](#)
 - b) [ISPM 12. 2016. Phytosanitary certificates. Rome, IPPC, FAO;](#)
 - c) [ISPM 24. 2017. Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures. Rome, IPPC, FAO;](#)
 - d) [MPI Biosecurity Organisms Register for Imported Commodities \(BORIC\);](#)
 - e) [MPI Schedule of Regulated \(Quarantine\) Weed Seeds.](#)
- (2) Under section 142O(3) of the Act it is declared that section 142O(1) does not apply, that is, a notice under section 142O(2) of the Act is not required to be published before material that amends or replaces any material incorporated by reference has legal effect as part of those documents.

1.3 Definitions

- (1) Definitions are listed in Appendix 1.

1.4 General

- (1) All fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products must:
 - a) meet the requirements of Part 1: *General Requirements* and Part 2: *Specific Requirements*;
 - b) be free from regulated pests and contaminants (e.g. seeds, soil, animal or plant material);
 - c) be clearly labelled with the with the brand name, full description of contents of each package (product type and intended use), or have this information stated on the invoice or accompanying manufacturer's certificate;
 - d) be shipped in a manner to prevent contamination by regulated pests;
 - e) be commercially packaged in:
 - i) a clean bag made of either polypropylene or double walled strong paper secured by stitching, stapling or sealing; or
 - ii) a strong, clean plastic sealed package.
- (2) Following any treatments and certification, all fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products must be packaged and held in a manner to prevent contamination by regulated pests.

Guidance

- The full list of regulated and non-regulated pests for New Zealand can be found in the MPI Biosecurity Organisms Register for Imported Commodities (BORIC).
- Where regulated pests are found during inspection, the importer will be given the appropriate options for the goods. These options may include:
 - i) identification of seeds or pests (e.g. insects);
 - by [approved suppliers of pest identification services](#), listed in Table 1
Depending on the result of the identification, further action may be required.
 - ii) treatment, under the treatment standard: [MPI-STD-ABTRT Approved Biosecurity Treatments](#)
 - by [approved NZ treatment suppliers](#).
 - iii) reshipment of the goods to the country of origin, or destruction of the goods.
- Biosecurity clearance, under section 26 of the Act, may be issued when the goods meet all the requirements of this IHS, provided the applicable requirements of section 27 and 28 of the Act are met.

1.5 Documentation and inspection

- (1) All documentation must be written in English.
- (2) All documentation will be inspected to verify that it complies with the requirements of this IHS.
- (3) The consignment may be inspected on arrival to verify compliance with the requirements on this IHS.
- (4) Inspections must be completed at a transitional facility or biosecurity control area, which has been approved by MPI as suitable for inspecting the goods.

1.6 Permit to import

- (1) The following fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products require a permit to import:
 - a) processed fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products derived from plant products;
 - b) manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products containing microorganisms;
 - c) coco peat products, except those products that have been treated pre-export or are being heat treated on arrival (refer to Part 2: *Specific Requirements*).
- (2) Complete the [application form](#) on the MPI website to apply for a permit to import.
- (3) A copy of the permit to import must accompany the goods.
- (4) Applicants must provide information describing the ingredients and manufacturing process as an attachment to the application for a permit to import. If the temperature of the product has been raised by heat during processing, full details of the temperature reached and the duration must be provided.
- (5) For coco peat, a [questionnaire](#) must be completed when applying for a permit to import. A permit to import will not be issued unless a questionnaire has been completed.

1.7 Phytosanitary certificate

- (1) Consignments requiring a phytosanitary certificate are set out in Part 2: *Specific Requirements*.
- (2) All phytosanitary certificates must be issued by the exporting National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) in accordance with [ISPM 12](#) and include any additional declaration(s) as required under Part 2: *Specific Requirements*.
- (3) Before a phytosanitary certificate is issued, the NPPO of the exporting country must inspect the consignment, and must be satisfied that the consignment is free of any regulated pests and contaminants (e.g. seeds, soil, animal or plant material).
- (4) The phytosanitary certificate must include the following declaration:
 - a) *“This is to certify that the plants, plant products or other regulated articles described herein have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from the quarantine pests specified by the importing contracting party and to conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing contracting party, including those for regulated non-quarantine pests.”*

Guidance

- For a list of NPPOs, refer to the [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#) website.
- If any visually detectable pests are found by the NPPO during the inspection of the consignment, the certifying NPPO can establish the regulatory status of the pest by referring to BORIC.
- If the pest is not listed in BORIC, the certifying NPPO can contact [MPI](#) to establish pest regulatory status.

1.8 Manufacturer's certificate

- (1) Consignments requiring a manufacturer's certificate are set out in Part 2: *Specific Requirements*.
- (2) All manufacturer's certificates must be issued on company letterhead by a person authorised to act on behalf of the company and include the following information:
 - a) authorised person's name, signature, job title and date of issue;
 - b) name and address of the supplier (if different to the manufacturer);
 - c) product identity (description or brand name);
 - d) details of the processing;
 - e) date of manufacture.

1.9 Treatment certificate

- (1) A treatment certificate is required for fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products containing viable seed and coco peat products, as set out in Part 2.1 and Part 2.4 (Options 4 and 6), unless details of the treatment have been specified on the phytosanitary certificate.
- (2) Treatment certificates must be issued on company letterhead by a person authorised to act on behalf of the company and include the following information:
 - a) authorised person's name, signature, job title and date of issue;
 - b) product identity (description or brand name);
 - c) date and details of the treatment.

1.10 Laboratory test result

- (1) A laboratory test result is required for coco peat products where details of the 'grow- out' test are not recorded on the phytosanitary certificate, as set out in Part 2.4 (Option 1).
- (2) All laboratory test results must be endorsed by government or issued by a government operated laboratory and include the following information:
 - a) authorised person's name, signature, job title and date of issue;
 - b) original number of the phytosanitary certificate;
 - c) product identity (description or brand name);
 - d) completion date of testing;
 - e) declaration stating that:
 - i) *"the coco peat has been randomly sampled and tested by a 'grow-out' test showing freedom from viable seeds."*

Part 2: Specific Requirements

2.1 Processed fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products derived from plant products

2.1.1 Treatment

- (1) Treatment for seed devitalisation is required for products that contain or are suspected to contain viable seed. One of the following treatments must be carried out:
 - a) heat treatment by raising the core temperature of the product to a minimum of 85°C for at least 15 hours at approximately 40% relative humidity; or
 - b) autoclaving at 120°C core temperature for 30 minutes at 100kPa.

2.1.2 Documentation

- (1) The following documents are required:
 - a) permit to import;
 - b) phytosanitary certificate;
 - c) manufacturer's certificate.
- (2) A treatment certificate is only required if viable seeds have been detected in the product and details of the treatment are not recorded on the phytosanitary certificate.

2.2 Manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products in the form of granular, fibrous, powder or liquid derived from plant material

- (1) This Part sets out the specific requirements for manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products in the form of granular, fibrous, powder and liquid derived from plant material.

2.2.1 Documentation

- (1) The following document is required:
 - a) manufacturer's certificate.

Guidance

- [ACVM class determination](#) will be required if label claims are made.

2.3 Manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products containing microorganisms

- (1) This Part sets out the specific requirements for manufactured fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products which contain microorganisms.

2.3.1 Documentation

- (1) The following documents are required:
 - a) permit to import;
 - b) manufacturer's certificate.

Guidance

Prior to applying for the permit to import, the importer should take all reasonable steps to ensure that all microorganisms in the product are approved for import into New Zealand.

New Organism status:

- Any microorganism in the product must not be a new organism refer to the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996;
- [HSNO approvals register](#) can be searched on the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) website. When a microorganism is listed as present in New Zealand on this register, or approved by the EPA for general release, the application code or approval code (e.g. BER00001) should be recorded on the permit application;
- if the species is not listed on the HSNO approvals register, the importer may contact the [EPA new organisms group](#) for further advice

Regulatory status:

- the regulatory status of any microorganism in the product can be searched on [BORIC](#);
- if the microorganism is not listed on BORIC, or the regulatory status is unclear, contact [MPI plant imports team](#) for further advice;
- additional requirements for the microorganisms may also be required under the [IHS for microorganisms from all countries](#).

2.4 Coco peat (= coir pith, coir peat) products

- (1) This Part sets out the specific requirements for coco peat products.
- (2) Coco peat products must meet the requirements of one of the options outlined in Table 1.
- (3) Coco peat products must be produced by a method other than the traditional method of retting husks in open troughs or ponds.
- (4) Washing or rinsing of coco peat, chips or crush must be by a method using bore water not pond or dam water.
- (5) Coco peat drying areas must be buffered underneath from contact with soil.
- (6) A plant free buffer zone of 3 metres must be maintained around the coco peat drying areas unless concrete walls are built on the perimeter of concrete pads.
- (7) Trade samples of any type, up to 5kg in total weight, must be free from seeds, soil or animal and plant material. These samples will require 100% inspection on arrival.

Table 1. Specific requirements for coco peat products imported under different import options

Option 1:	Coco peat products from quality production system with a 'grow-out test' in the exporting country.
	<p>(1) Coco peat products must be randomly sampled and tested by a "grow out test" by the NPPO of the exporting country to confirm freedom from viable seeds.</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>(1) import permit:</p> <p>a) A coco peat questionnaire must be completed when applying for the import permit.</p> <p>(2) Phytosanitary certificate:</p> <p>a) the following additional declaration must be endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate:</p> <p>i) <i>"this consignment has been randomly sampled and tested by a 'grow-out' test showing freedom from viable seeds."</i></p> <p>(3) Laboratory test result, only required if the phytosanitary certificate is not endorsed with the above declaration.</p>
Option 2:	Coco peat products from quality production system with 'grow-out' test in New Zealand
	<p>(1) Coco peat products imported with a 'grow-out' test on arrival in New Zealand must be held in a transitional facility approved to hold plant products for the duration of the testing.</p> <p>(2) Biosecurity clearance will only be given upon receipt of negative 'grow-out' test results.</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>(1) import permit:</p> <p>a) a coco peat questionnaire must be completed when applying for the import permit.</p> <p>(2) Phytosanitary certificate.</p>
Option 3:	Grow slabs and grow bags for use in a transitional facility in New Zealand
	<p>(1) Coco peat products must be used in a New Zealand's transitional facility for a minimum of 9 months before a biosecurity clearance can be given.</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>(1) Import permit:</p> <p>a) a coco peat questionnaire must be completed when applying for the import permit.</p> <p>(2) Phytosanitary certificate.</p>

Option 4:	Coco peat products treated prior to export
(1)	<p>Prior to export, the coco peat products must be treated by one of the following MPI approved treatments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ethylene oxide, under an initial minimum vacuum of 50kPa at 1500g/m³ for 4 hours at 50°C. Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to export; or ethylene oxide, under an initial minimum vacuum of 50kPa at 1500g/m³ for 24 hours at 21°C. Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to export; or heat treatment by raising the core temperature of the peat to a minimum of 85°C for at least 15 hours at approximately 40% relative humidity; or autoclaving at 120°C core temperature for 30 minutes at 100kPa. <p>(2) Treatment details must be recorded in the disinfection and/or disinfection treatment section of the phytosanitary certificate.</p>
Documentation	(1) Phytosanitary certificate.

Option 5:	Coco peat products sterilised during manufacture
Documentation	<p>(1) Manufacturer's certificate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the core temperature that the product reached during manufacture and the time held at that temperature must be recorded in the manufacturer's certificate. <p>(2) Phytosanitary certificate.</p>

Option 6:	Coco peat products imported for treatment in New Zealand
(1)	<p>When the consignment arrives in New Zealand coco peat products must be treated by one of the following MPI approved treatments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> heat treatment, by raising the core temperature of the peat to 85°C for at least 15 hours at 40% relative humidity; or autoclaving at 120°C core temperature for 30 minutes at 100kPa; or ethylene oxide, under an initial minimum vacuum of 50kPa at 1500g/m³ for 4 hours at 50°C; or ethylene oxide, under an initial minimum vacuum of 50kPa at 1500g/m³ for 24 hours at 21°C.

Guidance

- Coco peat products with "grow out" test in New Zealand (Option 2), will be sampled randomly by an inspector on arrival. Compressed product will be broken down for sampling.

2.5 Raw peat and processed peat products

- (1) This part sets out the specific requirements for raw peat and processed peat products.
- (2) Raw excavated peat, including peat used as a packing material, must meet the requirements of one of the options outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Specific requirements for importation of raw excavated peat

Option 1:	Raw peat from all countries treated prior to export
(1) Prior to export, the raw peat must be treated by autoclaving at 120°C core temperature for 30 minutes at 100kPa. (2) Treatment details must be recorded in the disinfestation and/or disinfection treatment section of the phytosanitary certificate.	
Documentation	
(1) Phytosanitary certificate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) before a phytosanitary certificate is issued, the NPPO of the exporting country must be satisfied that the raw peat has been treated and is held securely post treatment to prevent re-contamination. 	

Option 2:	Raw peat from Canada produced under the Canadian Peat Certification Programme
Documentation (1) Phytosanitary certificate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) before a phytosanitary certificate is issued, the NPPO of the exporting country must inspect the raw peat and must be satisfied that the raw peat conforms to the Canadian Peat Certification Programme. b) the following additional declaration must be endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>“this raw peat consignment conforms to the Canadian Peat Certification Programme.”</i> 	

Option 3:	Raw peat from Australia, Canada and the European Union
Documentation (1) Phytosanitary certificate.	<p>Note: The European Union countries are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.</p>

- (2) For processed peat products, the core temperature must be raised to a minimum of 85°C for at least 15 hours at approximately 40% relative humidity.

Documentation

- (1) Manufacturer's certificate.
- a) the core temperature that the product reached during manufacture and the time held at that temperature must be recorded in the manufacturer's certificate.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Definitions have the same meaning as defined by the Act and ISPM 5, unless set out below:

Bioremediation product

A product that uses naturally occurring organisms in a bioremediation process (to break down hazardous substances into less toxic or non-toxic substances).

Biosecurity Organisms Register for Imported Commodities (BORIC)

A register of organisms that may be associated with plants or plant products that are imported into New Zealand. The quarantine status for each species for New Zealand is indicated i.e. regulated or non-regulated.

Coir

Fibre derived from the husk of coconuts.

Coco peat (=coir pith or coir peat)

The by-product which arises during the extraction of coir fibre from coconut husks. It can be used as a multi-purpose growing medium, which may be compressed into finished products (e.g. bales, discs, pots) or uncompressed chips and crush.

Fertiliser

A substance applied to soil or to plant tissues to supply one or more plant nutrients essential to the growth of plants.

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

As deposited in 1951 with FAO in Rome and subsequently amended. International Plant Protection Convention.

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM)

An international standard adopted by the Conference of FAO, the interim Commission on Phytosanitary or the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, established under the IPPC.

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)

The NPPO of New Zealand

National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO)

Official service established by a government to discharge the functions specified by the IPPC.

Peat

Also referred to as peat moss. Partially carbonised plant tissue formed by partial decomposition of various plants in water. Peat moss can be exported both as a distinct commodity or used as a packing material.

Processed peat products

Peat products that have been sterilised during manufacture such as peat pots, peat plugs and pellets.

Retting

A process to separate fiber from stems using micro-organisms and moisture to dissolve or rot away cellular tissues.

Appendix 2: Amendment Record

The following table provides a summary of amendments to this import health standard.

Number:	Details:	Date:
1	<p>(1) under Section 2.1.1: The statement “heat treatment by raising the core temperature of the <i>peat</i> to” has been changed to “heat treatment by raising the core temperature of the <i>product</i> to”.</p> <p>(2) under Section 2.4, Option 2 The statement “, and the <i>coco peat</i> (randomly sampled) is free from viable seeds based on a ‘grow-out test’” has been removed.</p> <p>(3) under Section 2.4, Option 4: a) The statements “<i>must inspect the coco peat and</i>” and “<i>must be satisfied that the coco peat is free of any visually detectable soil, seeds, contaminant animal or plant material and other extraneous matter</i>” have been removed. b) The statement “<i>a) this coco peat consignment has: i) been inspected in accordance with appropriate official procedures and found to be free of any visually detectable soil, seeds, regulated pests, contaminant animal or plant material and other extraneous material;</i>” has been removed. c) The statement “<i>Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to the consignment arriving in New Zealand;</i>” has been changed to “<i>Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to export</i>”.</p> <p>(4) under Section 2.4, Option 6: The statement “<i>Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to the consignment arriving in New Zealand;</i>” has been removed.</p>	31 May 2017
2	<p>Reference to ISPM 24 was added to the “Equivalence” Part. Reference to the other IHSs which were outlined in the Guidance box in Part 1.1 were moved to the “Other information” part. The generic statement from ISPM 12 has been added to the “Phytosanitary Certificate” section. In Part 1.10, “must be issued by a person authorised to act on behalf of the company” has been replaced with “must be endorsed by government or issued by government’s laboratories”. Part 2 of the IHS has been restructured to fix errors, clarify the ambiguities and avoid repetition of the requirements. In Part 2.1, “Treatment for seeds devitalisation is required for products containing viable seed” has been changed to “Treatment for seeds devitalisation is required for products that contain or are suspected to contain viable seed”. In Part 2.5 (option 2 and 3), additional declarations (the raw peat consignment is free of soil, regulated pests and contaminants; and the raw peat consignment is packaged in clean packaging) have been removed. Definitions list in Appendix 1 has been updated.</p>	2 October 2018