Import Health Standard

Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin

IHS.FERTGRO

13 May 2025

TITLE

Import Health Standard: Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin

COMMENCEMENT

This Import Health Standard comes into force on 13 May 2025.

REVOCATION

This import health standard revokes and replaces the Import Health Standard: Fertilisers and Growing Media of Plant Origin, 13 May 2025.

The amendment history to this import health standard is set out in Appendix 2: Amendment Record.

ISSUING AUTHORITY

This Import Health Standard is issued under section 24A of the Biosecurity Act 1993 to incorporate amendments made pursuant to sections 24B and 166A of that Act.

Dated at Wellington, 13 May 2025

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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 <u>Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act)</u> 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 should be read by anyone involved in the process of importing fertilisers and growing media of plant origin into New Zealand.

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 may not be cleared for entry into New Zealand and may be directed for treatment, reshipment, destruction, or further action deemed appropriate by a chief technical officer (CTO).

Equivalence

The CTO may consider an application for equivalent phytosanitary 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 <u>International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures 24</u> (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).

Part 1: General Requirements

1.1 Application

(1) This IHS applies to fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products derived from plant material, coco peat and peat products.

Guidance

- Growing media associated with imported nursery stock is out of scope of this IHS.
- The following goods are out of scope of this IHS and are eligible for import under:
 - Plant products or by-products of processed plant products intended to be used for animal feeds
 - Mats and fibres derived from plants for uses other than fertilisers, growing media, or bioremediation products
 - Bulk inorganic fertilisers
 - Fertilisers containing microorganisms but no plant-based materials
- There are no biosecurity requirements for the import of the following goods:
 - 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).
 - Inorganic liquid fertilisers
 - Inorganic bagged/containerised fertilisers
 - Inorganic growing media (e.g. perlite, vermiculite, akadama, kanuma)

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) <u>ISPM 24. 2017. Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures.</u> Rome, IPPC, FAO;
 - d) MPI Official New Zealand Pest Register (ONZPR);
 - 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 viable regulated seeds, live regulated arthropods, soil, and animal material;
 - c) be held and shipped in a secure manner to prevent contamination.

Guidance

- Products containing both plant and animal origin ingredients must meet the requirements of this standard and the relevant animal product standard.
- Products containing viable seeds should meet the requirements of this standard and also the Seeds for Sowing Standard.

1.5 Packaging

- (1) Consignments must be securely packaged to prevent loss of contents and cross-contamination during transportation.
- (2) Packaging materials must be inert, clean, and appropriate for the goods.
- (3) Unaccompanied consignments must be clearly labelled to identify the contents, along with the names and contact details of the recipient and sender.

1.6 Documentation and inspection

- (1) Documentation must be either:
 - a) in English; or
 - b) accompanied by an English translation.
- (2) Documentation will be inspected to verify that it complies with the requirements of this IHS.

Guidance

- Consignments may be inspected on arrival at a transitional facility or biosecurity control area to verify compliance with the requirements of this IHS.
- Where regulated seeds or arthropods are found during inspection, the importer will be given the following options:
 - i) identification of seeds or arthropods;
 - by <u>approved suppliers of pest identification services</u> (listed in Table 1)
 Depending on the result of the identification, further action for regulated seeds and arthropods may be required.
 - ii) treatment, under the Treatment Requirement: Approved Biosecurity Treatments (MPI-ABTRT)
 - by approved NZ treatment suppliers.
 - iii) reshipment of the products to the country of export, or destruction of the goods.

1.7 Permit

- (1) A permit is required only where specified in Part 2: Specific Requirement of the IHS.
- (2) The following information must be provided when applying for a permit:
 - a) description of the products' ingredients
 - b) details of the processing and any treatment involved (dosage and duration)
 - if products contain viable microorganisms, full scientific name (genus and species) of all microorganisms.

Guidance

- A permit will specify:
 - whether the product is eligible for biosecurity clearance on arrival;
 - whether the product should be directed to a transitional facility on arrival;

- whether other documentations (phytosanitary certificate, manufacturer's certificate, treatment certificate) are required;
- any special conditions necessary to show the requirements of this IHS are met; and
- any special conditions that effectively manage the biosecurity risk.
- To apply for a permit, fill out the <u>Application</u> for a Permit, and submit via the online permit application system https://animalplantimportpermit.mpi.govt.nz/

1.8 Phytosanitary certificate

- (1) A phytosanitary certificate is required where specified in Part 2: Specific Requirements of the IHS.
- (2) Phytosanitary certificates must be issued by the exporting National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) in accordance with <u>ISPM 12</u> 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 viable seeds, live regulated arthropods, soil, and animal 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 <u>International Plant Protection Convention</u> (IPPC) website.

1.9 Manufacturer's certificate

- (1) A manufacturer's certificate is required where specified in Part 2: Specific Requirements of the IHS.
- (2) 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 and any treatment involved (core temperature, dosage, duration, etc);
 - e) date of manufacture.

1.10 Treatment certificate

- (1) A treatment certificate is required where specified in Part 2: Specific Requirements of the IHS.
- (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 (core temperature, dosage, duration, etc).
- (3) Acceptable treatments are listed in the table below:

Treatment type	Details
Moist heat	 raise the core temperature of the product to a minimum of: 85°C for 15 hours at 40% relative humidity 100°C for 25 minutes at 40% relative humidity
Dry heat	 raise the core temperature of the product to a minimum of: 110°C for 16 hours 121°C for 2 hours 154°C for 30 minutes 193°C for 4 minutes 221°C for 2 minutes
Autoclaving	 raise the core temperature of the product to a minimum of: 120°C for 30 minutes at 100 kPa
Irradiation	minimum of 25 kGy

Guidance

- A separate treatment certificate is not required if the detail of the treatment is outlined on the
 phytosanitary certificate or manufacturing certificate.
- The treatment may occur during the manufacturing process or on arrival in New Zealand.
- Treatments may not be available on-arrival in New Zealand. It is recommended importers check before import if an approved treatment provider is available: MPI Approved Treatment Provider

1.11 Laboratory test result

- (1) A laboratory test result is required where specified in Part 2: Specific Requirements of the IHS.
- (2) 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) product identity (description or brand name);
 - c) completion date of testing;
 - d) declaration stating that:
 - i) "the product has been randomly sampled and tested using a 'grow-out' test showing freedom from viable seeds."

Guidance

 A separate laboratory test result is not required if the above declaration is endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate.

Part 2: Specific Requirements

2.1 Fertilisers, growing media, and bioremediation products

(1) Fertilisers, growing media, and bioremediation products derived from plant material are eligible for biosecurity clearance if it meets the requirements set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Requirements for importation of fertilisers, growing media, and bioremediation products

#.	Type of products	General requirements	Documentation requirements
1	Any products containing viable microorganisms	Microorganisms must not be: new organisms regulated pests	Permit issued in accordance with Part 1.7
2	Manufactured products	Products must be manufactured into the form of granular, fibrous, powder or liquid.	Manufacturers certificate issued in accordance with Part 1.9 that also details: (a) the final form of the product
3	Products that may contain viable seed	Products must be treated with one of the following options (see Part 1.10): Moist heat Dry heat Autoclaving Irradiation	Manufacturers certificate issued in accordance with Part 1.9 that also details: (a) the treatment process that has been applied OR Treatment certificate issued in accordance with Part 1.10
4	All other products		Permit issued in accordance with Part 1.7

Guidance

- Fertilisers, growing media and bioremediation products are 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.
- Examples of growing media are mushroom casings, processed peat pots, pellets, discs, and plugs.
- For products containing viable microorganisms;
 - i) the new organism status of microorganisms can be searched on <u>HSNO approvals register</u>. If the microorganism is not listed on the HSNO approvals register, the importer may contact the <u>EPA new</u> organisms' group for further advice.
 - ii) the regulatory status of microorganisms can be searched on Official New Zealand Pest Register (ONZPR). If the microorganism is not listed on ONZPR, or the regulatory status is unclear, contact MPI plant imports team for further advice.
- For manufactured products, <u>ACVM class determination</u> may be required if label claims are made.

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

- (1) This Part sets out the specific requirements for coco peat products.
- (2) The import option must be specified on the import documentation.

2.2.1 Coco peat products produced in a quality production system

- (1) Coco peat must be produced using quality production systems to avoid any contamination with viable seeds, live regulated arthropods, soil, and animal material.
- (2) The production system must ensure that:
 - a) traditional methods of retting husks in open troughs or ponds are not being used; and
 - b) bore water must be used for coco peat, chips, or crush washing/rinsing; and
 - c) coco peat drying areas must be buffered underneath from contact with soil; and
 - d) 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.
- (3) Coco peat products are eligible for biosecurity clearance if they meet the requirements of one of the options set out in Table 2.

Table 2. Requirements for importation of coco peat products produced in a quality production system

Option 1: Coco peat products with a 'grow-out' test in the exporting country

Testing

(1) Coco peat products must be randomly sampled and tested by the NPPO of the exporting country using a 'grow out' test to confirm freedom from viable seeds.

Documentation

- (2) Phytosanitary certificate:
 - a) the following additional declaration must be endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate:
 - i) "this consignment has been randomly sampled and tested by a 'grow-out' test showing freedom from viable seeds."
- (3) A laboratory test result is only required if the above declaration is not endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate.

Option 2: Coco peat products with 'grow-out' test in New Zealand

Direction to transitional facility

(1) Consignments must be directed to a transitional facility approved to receive plant products for the duration of the testing.

Testing

- (2) Consignments must be randomly sampled by MPI and tested using a 'grow-out' test.
- (3) Consignments will be granted biosecurity clearance upon receipt of negative 'grow-out' test results.

Documentation

(4) Phytosanitary certificate

Option 3: Grow slabs and grow bags for use in a transitional facility in New Zealand

Direction to transitional facility

- (1) Consignments must be directed into a transitional facility approved to receive plant products.
- (2) Grow slabs and grow bags must be used/held in the transitional facility for a minimum of 9 months.

Documentation

(3) Phytosanitary certificate

2.2.2 Coco peat products undergoing phytosanitary treatment

(1) Coco peat products are eligible for biosecurity clearance if they meet the requirements of one of the options set out in Table 3.

Table 3. Requirements for importation of coco peat products undergoing phytosanitary treatment

Option 4: Coco peat products treated prior to export

Treatment

- (1) Prior to export, the coco peat products must be treated by one of the following treatment types (see per Part 1.10).
 - Moist heat
 - Dry heat
 - Autoclaving
 - Irradiation

Documentation

- (2) Phytosanitary certificate
 - a) Treatment details can be recorded in the disinfection and/or disinfection treatment section of the phytosanitary certificate.
- (3) A treatment certificate is only required if the treatment details are not recorded on the phytosanitary certificate.

Option 5: Coco peat products sterilised during manufacture

Treatment

- (1) During manufacture, the coco peat products must be treated by one of the following treatment types (see per <u>Part 1.10</u>).
 - Moist heat
 - Dry heat
 - Autoclaving
 - Irradiation

Documentation

- (2) 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.
- (3) Phytosanitary certificate

Option 6: Coco peat products imported for treatment in New Zealand

Direction to transitional facility

(1) Consignments must be directed to a transitional facility approved to receive plant products for treatment.

Treatment

- (2) Coco peat products must be treated by one of the following treatment types (see per Part 1.10).
 - Moist heat
 - Dry heat
 - Autoclaving

Documentation

(3) No additional documentation is required.

Guidance

- Examples of coco peat products are:
 - i) coco peat products for use as growing media in various grades
 - ii) finished products for horticultural/agricultural use (e.g. grow slabs, grow bags, bales, blocks, discs, pots, starter cubes and small blocks)
 - iii) 'chips' and 'crush' derived from the whole chopped and crushed husk pieces
 - iv) compressed or non-compressed product
- Compressed coco peat products that require a "grow out" test will be broken down for sampling.
- For importation of trade samples of coco peat please refer to the <u>Research Samples</u> (excluding animal samples) import health standard.

2.3 Raw peat and processed peat products

(1) This part sets out the specific requirements for raw peat and processed peat products.

2.3.1 Raw peat

(1) Raw excavated peat, including peat used as a packing material, must meet the requirements of one of the options outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. 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 one of the following treatment types (see per Part 1.10).
 - Moist heat
 - Dry heat
 - Autoclaving
 - Irradiation

Documentation

- (2) Phytosanitary certificate:
 - a) Treatment details can be recorded in the disinfestation and/or disinfection treatment section of the phytosanitary certificate.

(3) Treatment certificate, only required if the treatment details are not recorded on the phytosanitary certificate.

Option 2: Raw peat from Canada produced under the Canadian Peat Certification Programme

Documentation

- (1) Phytosanitary certificate:
 - a) before a phytosanitary certificate is issued, the Canadian NPPO 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:
 - i) "this raw peat consignment conforms to the Canadian Peat Certification Programme."

Option 3: Raw peat from Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and the European Union

Documentation

(1) Phytosanitary certificate

2.3.2 Processed peat

- (1) Processed peat products must be treated by one of the following treatment types (see per Part 1.10).
 - Moist heat
 - Dry heat
 - Autoclaving
 - Irradiation

Documentation

- (2) Manufacturer's certificate
- (3) Treatment certificate only required if the treatment details are not recorded on the manufacturer's certificate.

Guidance

- Examples of processed peat products are peat pots, peat plugs and pellets.
- Processed peat products that do not meet the requirements of Part 2.3.2 may be eligible for import under Part 2.1.

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).

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 multipurpose 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.

Grow out test

A test which is conducted to determine the presence/absence of the viable seeds. The products will be broken down for sampling, and the samples will be grown for 3 weeks to observe if any seeds germinate from them.

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.

Official New Zealand Pest Register (ONZPR)

The ONZPR is the site for official information about pests and disease-causing organisms in New Zealand, authorised by MPI.

Peat

Includes all stages of anaerobic decomposition of *Sphagnum* and other wetland plants: dried material, peat moss (mildly decomposed), peat (advanced decomposition.) Peat can be exported 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.

Plant material

The term "Plant material" in this IHS also covers lichens, algae or fungi unless specified otherwise.

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.

#:	Details:	Date:
1	(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".	31 May 2017
	(2) under Section 2.4, Option 2 The statement ", and the coco peat (randomly sampled) is free from viable seeds based on a 'grow-out test" has been removed.	
	(3) under Section 2.4, Option 4: a) The statements "must inspect the coco peat and" and "must be satisfied that the coco peat is free of any visually detectable soil, seeds, contaminant animal or plant material and other extraneous matter" have been removed.	
	b) The statement "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;" has been removed.	
	c) The statement "Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to the consignment arriving in New Zealand;" has been changed to "Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to export".	
	(4) under Section 2.4, Option 6: The statement "Treatment must occur no more than 21 days prior to the consignment arriving in New Zealand;" has been removed.	
2	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.	2 October 2018
3	Amend Part 2.4(7) to remove requirements for trade samples, as these have been moved to the import health standard for <u>Research Samples (excluding animal samples)</u> .	21 June 2021
4	Part 2.1 updated to state that document requirements will be specified in the permit; provide guidance on what goods fit in this category. Transitional information provided in guidance box. Part 2.5 updated with headings for Raw and Processed Peat. Definition and references to BORIC replaced with ONZPR, hyperlinks updated, references to other IHS updated, language around permits made consistent.	10 March 2022

5	Part 2.4 updated with guidance for certain goods out of scope of this IHS Part 2.5 Table 2 Option 3 updated to clarify that the United Kingdom is no longer part of the European Union. Note clarifying list of EU countries removed. Spelling error and broken links fixed.	5 December 2022
6	Clarification throughout document that only products derived from plant material come under this standard. Part 1.1 updated to list inorganic growing media as a non-risk good. Part 1.5 updated to make clarify that English translations are allowed Part 1.6 updated to require a list of microorganisms contained in product Part 2.1 removal of transitional guidance added in amendment 4 Part 2.3 Removal of guidance that goods under this standard need to meet requirements in MICROIC.ALL. Definition of peat updated to include information about Sphagnum	28 April 2023
7	Re-numbered and formatted Part 2, including combining 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 into Part 2.1. Removed permit requirement for fertilisers and growing media of plant origin that undergo seed devitalisation treatment- Part 2.1 Coco peat- removed permit and questionnaire requirement- Part 2.2 (Previously Part 2.4) Clarified and updated guidance throughout the standard. Add definition of 'plant material' and 'grow out test' to Appendix 1	27 February 2024
8	Removed inspection regime from Guidance box under Part 1.6	13 May 2025