

# 5

Export Program  
Manual

## Special Procedures

### *Special Programs • Seed Health Accreditation*

PPQ in cooperation with the National Seed Health System initiated a process by which non government entities can become accredited to perform the following testing and inspections for commodities required for PPQ Form 577 or 579 issuance:

- ◆ Laboratory seed health testing (laboratory-based program to test seeds for plant pathogens using the standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System)
- ◆ Phytosanitary field inspection (field-based inspections of seed-producing fields, nurseries, or greenhouses for disease freedom using standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System)
- ◆ Seed sampling for seed health laboratory testing (sampling of seeds using standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System and forwarded by a traceable method to a government or accredited laboratory to conduct seed health laboratory tests)
- ◆ Visual inspections of seeds for phytosanitary certification (visual inspection of seed shipments using PPQ-approved methods at the exporter's facility for insects, weed seeds, soil, and other contaminants before issuing a PPQ Form 577 or 579)

The most current information about the accredited entities and the functions they are allowed to perform can be found on the PPQ Web page under Phytosanitary Issues Management – Accreditation.

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/plant\\_exports/accreditation.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_exports/accreditation.shtml)

Each non government entity is audited and evaluated by the National Seed Health System under the direct supervision of the National Accreditation Program Manager for PPQ. Upon successful completion of the initial audit and with the approval of PPQ, the entity becomes accredited. Each entity is accredited to perform certain functions listed on a letter of accreditation issued by PPQ.

Accredited entities provide a written report of their findings to the Authorized Certification Official (ACO). The report should include dates for each function the entity did. The written findings become part of the supporting documentation attached to the Issuing Office Copy of the certificate.

ACOs **cannot** issue certificates for commodities that:

- ◆ Underwent testing or inspection performed by an accredited entity for which that entity was **not** accredited to perform
- ◆ Were the subject of an activity performed by an entity **not** during the period for which the entity was accredited

PPQ's National Accreditation Program Manager ensures accredited entities maintain compliance with the standards as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) through annual audits and proficiency testing. Accreditation is valid for 3 years and can be renewed after a thorough audit is performed by PPQ and the National Seed Health System.

ACOs may accept documented results from accredited entities for accredited phytosanitary function(s). These documented results serve to determine eligibility to issue PPQ Forms 577 or 579 for seeds intended for propagation.

Accredited entities are required to use **only** those tests and methods listed in *Reference Manual B* to perform the specified phytosanitary functions for which they are accredited to perform. For more information about these tests and methods, go to the following National Seed Health System Web site address:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/pim/accreditation/Ref-Man-B.pdf>.