

To the Customer

OPTICAL WATERMARK ON PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES (EXPORT & RE-EXPORT)

We would like to inform you that the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) has developed an optical watermark system to be applied to the phytosanitary certificates issued by the AVA.

2. In principle, the certificates issued with the optical watermark will look essentially similar to the certificates that you had been applying for. However, there are the following physical security features which will distinguish the certificates with the optical watermark from those without the watermark:

- a) The optical watermark will consist of two features, a visible watermark and an invisible watermark. The visible watermark displays the logo of AVA, while the invisible watermark has the word "COPY". Both the visible and invisible watermark will be embedded into the document and printed together with the document on a laser print.
 - b) When photocopied, the visible watermark (i.e. logo of AVA) will deteriorate, while the invisible watermark will appear. To verify that a document is a photocopied version of the original document, one only has to check that either the visible watermark is not clearly visible or the invisible watermark is clearly seen.
 - c) In addition, there is a micro printing, found under the words "Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore", at the top right hand side of the certificate. The micro printing appears to be a very fine line on the certificate and this can only be viewed under the magnifying glass. This microprint comprises a repeating string of the certificate number. It will appear distorted when photocopied to detect any unauthorized reproduction of the document.
 - d) There is also a series of processes to embed the certificate information into a 2D Barcode before being transferred into the actual printout. This 2D Barcode is printed on the bottom left hand corner of the certificate.
 - e) The authorised signature on certificates bearing the optical watermark will be electronically applied, and not signed by hand. There will be no signature on the certificate attachments
 - f) As an added feature, the AVA will also allow enquiry by the authorities of the importing countries, through an Online Certificate Verification System (OCVS).
- 3 An advantage of the optical watermark is that it allows you, the customer, to print the certificates at your office, without the need to come to AVA's offices to collect the certificates. A user guide, together with the list of printers that can support the printing of the watermark features and a sample copy of certificate with the watermark are attached.

- 4 Phytosanitary certificates with optical watermark will be issued from 1 September 2009 onwards. We have already taken steps to inform the authorities of the importing countries with which we have significant trade, so as to ensure that your watermarked certificates will be accepted. Please note that for countries which do not agree to recognise the watermark, the usual phytosanitary certificates will continue to be issued and may be collected from our offices.
- 5 Should you have any questions or concerns arising from the changes described above, please do not hesitate to contact the following officers.

Ms Noemi P Gesmundo Tel: (65) 67530657
Email: noemi_gesmundo@ava.gov.sg

Mr Eric Casiano Tulang Tel: (65) 67519816
Email: eric_casiano_tulang@ava.gov.sg

Mr Toh Jenn Peow Tel: (65) 67519842
Email: toh_jenn_peow@ava.gov.sg

Issued by:
Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore