



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**02 July 2020**

### **BAF starts issuing electronic phytosanitary certificates**

Continuing with efforts to facilitate international trade on a biosafe platform through modern innovative systems, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) effective 01 July, 2020 has gone into electronic phytosanitary certification. This will see BAF creating and issuing Fijian phytosanitary certificates using the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) for commercial consignments exported from Fiji.

Fiji is amongst the first island countries in the region to go live with its ePhyto certifications.

While this process was previously limited to only hardcopy issuance, the new system will enable BAF to issue electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhyto) directly to countries that are connected to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) cloud based hub.

BAF will implement the use of ePhyto created via the GeNS system with New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (NZMPI) for starters and move to other trading countries in months to come.

To ensure smooth transition to the electronic platform, BAF will in parallel print and issue the paper copy of the new Fijian phytosanitary certificates for all commercial consignments until such time that BAF and its trading partners are content to go fully paperless.

Some of the key features of the new format includes the placement of Fiji's Coat of Arms and BAF logo on the phytosanitary certificates including the use of the QR codes to authenticate the certificates as an additional security feature.

For all non-commercial (personal) exports, BAF will continue to issue the existing version of Fiji's non-commercial phytosanitary certificates until BAF is fully equipped to go electronic with this at all its stations around Fiji. These measures will ensure trade flow with minimal disruption.

The GeNS is a centralised web-based system to create, send and receive ePhyto between the National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPO) of two trading countries via the IPPC hub. Linking to the hub means BAF will also start to receive ePhyto from countries that are connected with BAF on the hub for clearance of all commercial import consignments.

Implementing electronic certification of plants and plant products export is a significant step from BAF towards improving trade efficiency by reducing the time and cost of conveying phytosanitary certificates to countries where Fiji exports agricultural commodities.

Additionally, the system will also reduce issues of non-compliance at Fiji's borders which arise due to misplacement and/or late submission of original phytosanitary certificates. Needless to say that the new system will synchronize BAF with international best practices creating homogenous conditions for trade.

BAF undertook a soft launch of the ePhyto system yesterday at the Novotel Nadi in the presence of its local exporters and New Zealand and Australian counterparts who joined in via the Zoom platform.

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