

**Dr Perpetua McNamee**  
**Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer**

To all AVIs

Via email

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group  
Ballykelly House  
111 Ballykelly Road  
Drummond  
Ballykelly  
LIMAVADY  
BT49 9HP  
Telephone: 028 7744 2196  
Email: [perpetua.mcnamee@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:perpetua.mcnamee@daera-ni.gov.uk)

24 April 2020

Dear Authorised Veterinary Inspector,

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, DAERA is implementing contingency measures to minimise the need for face to face interaction between exporters, AVIs and DAERA staff, whilst continuing to work with delivery partners to provide veterinary certification to support trade.

We draw your attention to the Public Health Authority advice at <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>

This is to be observed during any inspections you carry out relating to veterinary certification. DAERA has advised exporters that where these guidelines cannot be followed, applications for veterinary export certification should be postponed or cancelled.

Please note the following temporary measures we are implementing:

**A. GB and EU exports:**

Currently all exports destined for GB and EU are issued on white paper. We plan to implement an electronic process from exporter application to the point of issue of the signed, stamped certificate by the AVI. Exporters should continue to apply electronically, either through DECOL and/or TRACES. Any applications normally made in person, at an office, should be posted or emailed to [DAERA Direct Regional Offices](#). **This will be implemented from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020.**

- (i) Veterinary support certification issued by DAERA, for disease clearance, **will be issued electronically**, either bearing an electronic signature or as a scanned copy of an original (wet) signed paper certificate, applied by a DAERA veterinarian. It will be issued to you in pdf format, by email, from a [daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:daera-ni.gov.uk) mail box. A hard copy will not be issued.
- Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.**

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

This Veterinary Support certificate can only be used for the consignment for which it has been requested and issued.

- (ii) Copies of certificates for your completion and issue will be **sent directly to you in electronic format**, rather than by post or collection from a DAERA Direct office. **Please advise us, by return, to [TradeAdminPost@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:TradeAdminPost@daera-ni.gov.uk) , if you would prefer to receive transmission of certificates to an alternative email address to those listed in Authorised Veterinary Inspector Practice contact details.**
- (iii) **On receipt, you should download the certificate, print off on white paper, and arrange for the normal inspections to take place.**
- (iv) **In exceptional circumstances, or where the above is not possible, please advise us of this @ DAERA Direct Regional Offices and we will, where possible, make alternative arrangements.**

#### **Scenario 1 – as current arrangements:**

- Consignment checks are completed.
- ITAHC is completed SAFELY at the exporting premises. (if possible to do so)
- Original is given to the exporter to accompany the consignment and as, at present, importer informs receiving competent authority of the arrival of the consignment by scanned paperwork if necessary.
- Copy of ITAHC is used to validate TRACES in the certifying AVI's practice, for cattle and sheep, or emailed to DAERA Direct Office for validation on TRACES, for other species.
- **Scan the completed certificate and email the pdf copy to your local DAERA Direct Office @ DAERA Direct Regional Offices**
- **The scan should be in colour, care taken to ensure that all pages are included, and all details are legible.**
- **Copy returned to DAERA within 1 working day.**
- Copy retained for your records, along with all other supporting documentation.

**Scenario 2 – if, following safe completion of the physical inspection, the ITAHC/Certificate cannot be completed safely at the exporting premises, then:**

- Consignment checks are completed.
- If ITAHC cannot be completed SAFELY at the exporting premises, then complete ITAHC at the certifying AVI's practice.
- ITAHC is used to validate TRACES in the certifying AVI's practice for cattle and sheep or emailed to DAERA Direct Office for validation on TRACES for other species.
- **Scan the completed certificate and email the pdf copy to your local DAERA Direct Office @ DAERA Direct Regional Offices**
- **The scan should be in colour, care taken to ensure that all pages are included, and all details are legible.**
- **Copy returned to DAERA within 1 working day.**
- Also email the scanned copy of ITAHC to the exporter who will email same to the importer.
- Scanned copy accompanies consignment and as, at present, importer informs receiving competent authority of the arrival of the consignment by scanned paperwork if necessary.

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- Post the original ITAHC to the exporter who will be responsible for posting same to the importer.
- Copy retained for your records, along with all other supporting documentation

**Further Flexibility to completion of veterinary inspections** (applies to both scenarios above)

Completion of the necessary physical checks and inspections required for the export can be completed by a vet, who has MRCVS status, but is not necessarily an AVI. This vet, through knowledge gained by conducting other clinical or routine work, may provide the necessary written assurances to the certifying AVI, to allow the completion of the Export Health Certificate or TRACES Certificate.

**B. Third Country (TC) exports** (non EU/GB exports):

As for GB and EU certificates, [to be implemented from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020:](#)

- (i) **Veterinary support certification will be issued with an electronic signature or scanned copy**, and emailed as a pdf document to you from a [daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:daera-ni.gov.uk) mail box. The Crown Gold original EHC will follow in the post.
- (ii) Applications should be made as far as possible in advance, to allow for postal delivery of Crown Gold paper certificates. Where postal delivery is not feasible, due to time constraints, **special arrangements must be made as DAERA Direct offices are currently closed to the general public. Please encourage your clients to provide as much advance notification as possible, to facilitate postal delivery.**
- (iii) Once issued, you must:

- **Scan the signed and stamped EHC and send a copy of the pdf by email to your local office @ [DAERA Direct Regional Offices](#). The scan must be in colour, care taken to ensure that all pages are included, and all details are legible.**
- **Copy returned to DAERA within 1 working day. This is essential to allow DAERA to notify the TC of the consignment in transit, to avoid any unnecessary delays with the importation procedures, and is critical in the case of live animal exports.**
- Issue the hard copy, (and electronic scanned copy as required) to the exporter
- Retain a copy for your records, along with all other supporting documentation.

For export applications to TCs, certificates are usually issued on Crown Gold paper. DAERA is working closely with Defra to consider easements that may be agreed with importing TCs under the current circumstances. For example,

1. Some TCs may accept an original EHC on white paper instead of Crown Gold paper,
2. Some TCs may accept a scanned colour copy of an EHC rather than the wet signed (original on paper) certificate.

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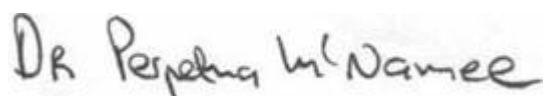


*Any agreed TC easements that may impact on your export health certification activities will be notified to you in due course. You will also be able to access further information about this on [DAERA Trade web page](#), when it becomes available.*

*Please contact [TradeAdminPost@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:TradeAdminPost@daera-ni.gov.uk) if you require clarification or have any queries on the above.*

*I look forward to your continued co-operation, at this difficult time, to ensure we maintain and facilitate trade.*

*Yours sincerely*



**DR PERPETUA MCNAMEE**  
**Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer**

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