Dear Retailers

**Requirement for Certificate of Inspection for Imported Organic Produce**

I am writing to ask for your cooperation in ensuring that the integrity of organic produce is maintained.


The Commission Regulation requires that a Certificate of Inspection, provided by the certifier of the organic produce in the third country, is made available to the authority at the point of entry for endorsement – in the UK it is the Port Health Authority (PHA). Before a PHA endorses a Certificate of Inspection they will check that the details on the Certificate are the same as those held on Defra’s database of organic import authorisations issued – the majority of imported organic produce needs to have an import authorisation from Defra before it is imported (see [http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/imports/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/imports/index.htm) for details).

If there are any discrepancies between a Certificate of Inspection and the database the PHA will not endorse the Certificate and it will not be allowed to clear customs until the problem is resolved. This might be done by:

- Providing a correct certificate; or
- Removing ‘organic’ references from the produce and marketing it as conventional produce.


From this date, all consignments of legally imported organic produce will have an endorsed Certificate of Inspection.
We are therefore writing to recommend that all retailers purchasing imported organic produce ask the supplier for a copy of an endorsed Certificate of Inspection. If the supplier does not have an endorsed Certificate of Inspection for imported organic produce, the produce is unlikely to be organic, and if it is sold as such, the retailer runs the risk of prosecution under consumer protection legislation.

If you have any queries about any aspect of the Commission Regulation or national legislation, or are suspicious of a potential fraud please contact us using the details below.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Wallis

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