



Export Certification A New Zealand Perspective

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Introduction



- New Zealand relies heavily on the reputation of its assurance and certification systems
- Preference is to have New Zealand standards accepted as acceptable in export markets
- If importing countries require more, then such intervention should be science and risk based, and minimised

What is an Official Certificate



- A government to government assurance that an identified consignment has been produced within a system of additional controls

- One Official Certificate can cover multiple assurances e.g. food safety and animal or plant health, origin, organic status, quota.....

Why do we need Official Certificates

- To better manage those risks to human, animal or plant health that can not be managed via normal importer / exporter relationships and due diligence coupled with a level of border verification
- To positively identify those consignments that have been produced under the additional production and or processing controls that have been determined to be essential for the consignment to meet the level of human, animal or plant health risk achieved by the importing government
- The purpose is to protect **population outcome parameters**, rather than just being a tool to facilitate consignment compliance and or conformance checks

Justification prerequisites

- It assumes the exporting country has a substantively inferior animal or plant health status, or achieves a lower level of human health protection for its foods under its domestic standards than the importing country
- It also assumes that the type, volume and end use of the commodity traded confers a realistic pathway for the associated differing levels of hazards to manifest as actual measurable increases in risk to the populations as a whole

Justification prerequisites

- For SPS issues, the justification for Official Certification is reserved for critical health risk issues where the level of “differential control” must occur during product or processing and hence requires an exporting government assured verification
- An interesting concept for wine given the risk it poses to health!
- Note, however, can also be used to identify relevant production (TBT) claims such as: variety, region, vintage, organic status

Additional Caveats

- Importing countries must have evidence as to what level of protection their domestic standards achieve
- Importing countries can not require outcomes, standards or levels of assurance in excess of those they are requiring of their own domestic industries (National treatment)

Considerations

- The potential for normal commercial to commercial assurance systems should be considered first
- Can the required level of assurance be achieved via the imposition of an appropriate level of “fit for purpose” due diligence on importers
- The number and type of attestations for a single outcome e.g. food safety should be kept to a minimum
- Where official assurances are required for multiple issues – consider combining e.g. food safety + plant health + organic + product integrity + quality?

It needs to be recognised

- The vast majority of trade occurs quite successfully without Official Certificates.
- Domestically there are very few situations where we as government physically inspect each consignment before it is released
- Requirements must meet the “National Treatment” test

Simplification of Attestations

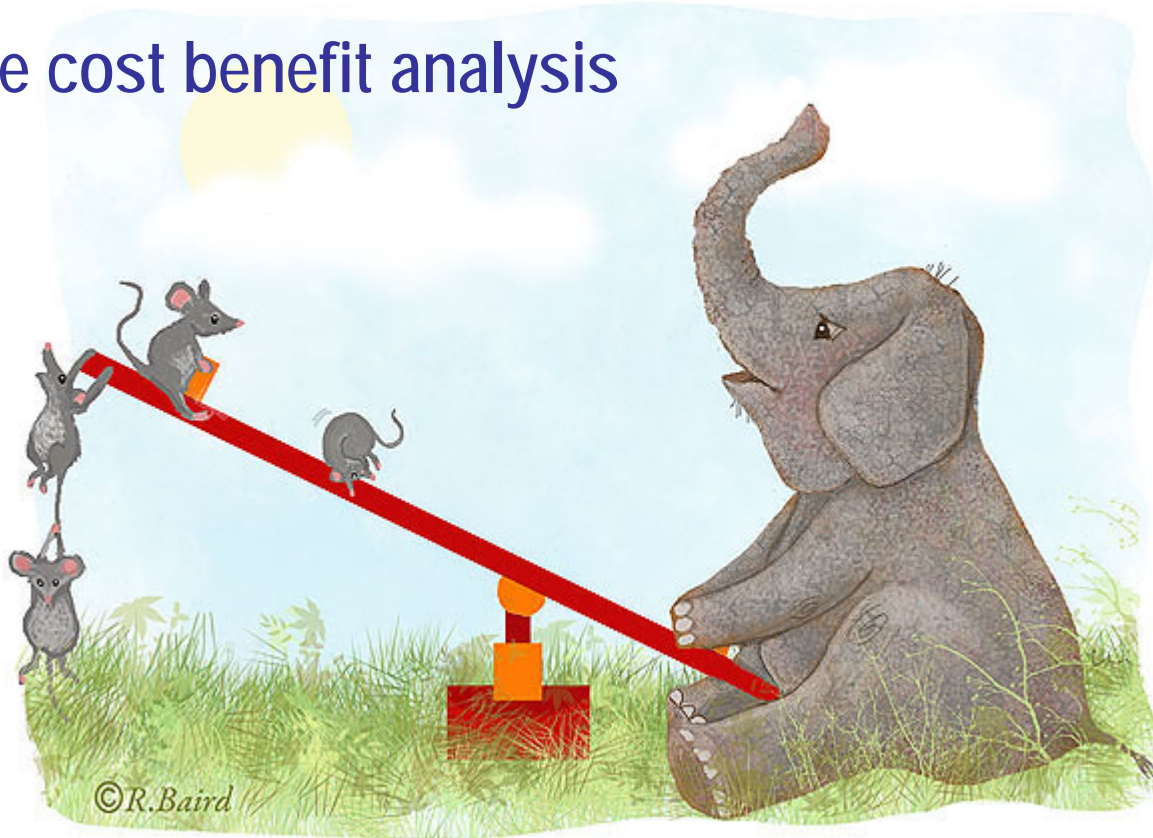
- With an appropriate relationship the relevant assurance could be:

“The product has been produced within a system which assures it meets the agreed outcomes”

- Arguably any other more detailed assurances are just redundant detail

Official Assurances come at a cost

What is the cost benefit analysis



What is the cost benefit analysis

- Certification process / system costs
- Additional verification process / system costs
- Shipment delay costs
- Additional courier / authentication costs

Benefits?

- Are Official Certificates really necessary / justified, will they substantially mitigate the risks
- How do we ensure the level of assurance provided by an Official Certificate is appropriately recognised, facilitates & expedites border clearance and reduces the need for parallel assurances
- How do we best prepare for the future which will be dominated by electronic information transfer and Trade Single Window environments

Added observations

- If the consignment can not be **uniquely identified** and or its **security & integrity ensured** then an official certificate is of limited use
- The amount of **specificity** required in assurances should **reflect** the **level of relationship** that exists between the competent authorities
- **Good relationships** (based on appropriate level of knowledge, confidence & experience) should allow the use of **simple more generic outcome focussed assurances**

Summary

- Official Certificates can (if we let them):
 - Help assure authenticity (especially E-certs)
 - Simplify & expedite border clearance
 - Facilitate onward certification
 - Potentially cover multiple types of unrelated assurances

Summary

- Official certificates should not:
 - Be required unless justified
 - Duplicate other processes or assurance mechanisms
 - Slow clearance or result in more inspection
 - Unduly focus on process detail rather than the outcome sought

Possible future direction

- Commercial assurance systems
- Due diligence of importers
- Trust in exporting country systems
- Conformity of systems
- Common standards and outcomes
- Official Certificates (where they are justified) should where possible state that the consignment has conformed with the protocol agreed between the two governments rather than attempting to replicate specific aspects of it

Thank you

