

# PLANTS, SEEDS AND USED AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY MACHINERY

## WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM UNDER THE OLD PROTOCOL?

Plants moving from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI) faced the same certification, checks and prohibitions as third country goods face when moving into the EU. This means:

- bans on NI movements of plants such as oak and beech trees and seed potatoes;
- burdensome certification and inspections for second-hand agricultural and forestry machinery moving to NI; and
- all plants for planting (e.g. rose bushes), including seeds, faced expensive certification and checks.

The agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries represent the largest number of businesses in Northern Ireland. Garden centres, plant nurseries and farmers in Northern Ireland have been unable to source important products – like seed potatoes and oak trees for the late Queen’s Jubilee – owing to the old Protocol’s rules.

## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN THIS AGREEMENT?

Lifted the ban on seed potatoes, meaning high quality British seed stock can move to Northern Ireland again.

Ended the ban on so-called “high risk” trees and shrubs: Garden centres and other businesses in NI reliant on supply from GB for native trees will regain access to 11 GB native and other popular species before the next planting season – species that have been identified as the key priorities by industry.

Removed routine checks on all these products.

Removed burdensome certification on movements of GB plants to NI.

Removed requirements for phytosanitary certificate checks and controls on agricultural and forestry machinery.

# WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

**Resumption of trade:** Businesses can again sell seed potatoes and the most commercially important native British trees across the whole UK.

**Simplified process:**

- There are no certification requirements - instead a simple NI plant health label will be attached by the professional operator (ie the supplying business).
- All growers moving plants in GB for commercial purposes must already be registered as professional operators and authorised under the UK plant passport scheme so this is not a new requirement. The plant label will be virtually the same as the plant passport required within GB, with the only additions being the words 'for use in UK only' and a QR code to scheme rules.
- To move agricultural machinery into Northern Ireland, businesses will only need to ensure it is clean and has a NI plant health label attached.

**Major reduction in costs** – from around £153 per individual consignment moved, to the £123 per year plant passport scheme membership fee, already needed for intra-UK movements

**Access for NI growers** - growers in Northern Ireland can access seed potatoes from GB which remain prohibited in Ireland, and garden centres, farmers and gardeners can access GB plants, trees and other products considerably more easily than in Ireland.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Businesses do not need to take any action now.

The new scheme will come into force in Autumn 2023 and the bans on seed potatoes and high-risk plants are to be lifted to the same timeline.

Further guidance will be provided well in advance of this date to allow businesses to prepare.

We will consult and work with business over the coming months ahead of implementing any changes required by these arrangements.

# SUMMARY OF PROCESS

Plants for planting, including seeds, seed potatoes and used agricultural-machinery

