



**PRESS RELEASE: "Electronic phytosanitary certification is still at the beginning" – Webinars of SHAFFE- FRESHFEL – The Alliance offers stocktaking on global readiness**

**SHAFFE, the Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters together with Freshfel Europe and the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, has held two webinars on the state of play of electronic phytosanitary certificates – one at the 27<sup>th</sup> and one at the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2021--to create a truly global outreach. At the centre of the meetings was the evolution of the IPPC ePhyto Hub, a global transmission system for phytosanitary certificates to which nearly 50 countries have been connected already. With around about 260 participants, the webinars bridged the gap between the global fruit industry and policy makers. Co-moderated by Mr. Philippe Isler, Director of the Alliance and Ms. Nelli Hajdu, Secretary General of SHAFFE, the webinar addressed key challenges such as different safety requirements, competition of the ePhyto hub with bilateral channels and different speeds of onboarding – while the fruit sector underlined the urgency to go completely go paperless.**

The meeting, which was attended by fruit and vegetable business together with NPPO representatives from all over the world, covered three major elements: 1) to create more global awareness on the IPPC ePhyto solution as a simple, inclusive and safe transmission tool for electronic phytosanitary certificates, 2) to motivate NPPO's all over the world to streamline endeavours and to implement this global solution, to facilitate trade for perishable goods, and 3) also to reveal and discuss the practical challenges in the implementation process together with the fruit sector. With bridging the gap between policy and business, the program included short introductions of key objectives and elements of concern of the global fruit industry with regard to the ePhyto solution presented by SHAFFE presidency team Mr. Charif Christian Carvajal and Ms. Marta Betancur as well as Freshfel General Delegate Mr. Philippe Binard with further explanations on the status and roll out of the project by Mr. Craig Fedchock, Senior Advisor to the IPPC ePhyto project and Mattia Wegmann from the GIZ.

SHAFFE Secretary General Ms. Nelli Hajdu highlighted in her intervention the strong fragmentation of the global fruit trade and the need for swift progress towards electronic phytosanitary certificates. While the global fruit industry has been managing well through the pandemic and even increased its global value (+3%, \$ 100 billion USD), the global pandemic with the omission of airfreight and courier services has been challenging the in-time delivery of original phytosanitary certificates and revealed the vulnerability of global trading operations. The fruit sector welcomed the swift emergency measures implemented by NPPO's all over the world. Nonetheless, the practical implementation is challenged by the evolution of different transmission systems, a lack of communication and understanding of the different national regulatory requirements for e-certification which in particular backfires in concrete at custom operations level, when inspectors are not trained to take ownership on the solutions offered and last but not least the different security requirements diverging from electronic seals to QR codes, challenging the harmonized implementation all over the world.

Craig Fedchock, Senior Advisor at the IPPC, highlighted that the onboarding is still at the very beginning, and all countries will have to continue to strengthen efforts to onboard to the IPPC ePhyto system as fast as possible, which can be done with support of the Alliance. The Alliance has successfully conducted a first onboarding project in Morocco and is implementing other ePhyto projects in Ecuador, Jordan, Madagascar, and Senegal. With Gerald Asare Mantey from the PPRDO Ghana, Christian Dellis from APHIS U.S. and Rodrigo Abad from Senasa Argentina, the first panel discussion on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 highlighted the success stories of implementation, while the discussion on



Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2021 together with Helene Klein, Sector Head of TRACES EU, Peter Neimanis from the Australian Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Environment, and Kurt Huang from Fruitease, one of China's biggest customs agents, emphasised that still more engagement will be needed by global players, to accelerate the solution. While the European Union has been fully onboarding the IPPC ePhyto Hub to their TRACES system, there is still a lot of opportunity for key trading partners such as China and Australia to fully come on board. Combined efforts of NPPOs, together with industry – including thorough analysis of business procedures – will be needed to continue the trend towards paperless processes.

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