A Guide to Plant Passports & Plant Labelling

This short guide covers the basics of Plant Passports – here you can learn about plant labelling and plant passports; what they're used for, when they're needed, and how to label plants correctly and efficiently through automated labelling.

- What are Plant Passports?
- What do Plant Passports do?
- What's the difference between a Plant Passport and a Phytosanitary Certificate?
- When do you need a Plant Passport?
- How to label plants efficiently

What are Plant Passports?

A Plant Passport is a label required for the movement of regulated plants within the UK and between Great Britain and Crown Dependencies, such as the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

They contain information about the company that has issued the document, the botanical name, the plant's country of origin, and a traceability code. This information is unique to each plant or plant product, and needs to be created individually for every plant.

While this process can be done by hand, an automated plant labelling solution helps to speed up the packaging line and removes error, increasing capacity and return on investment.

What do Plant Passports do?

Plant Passports are important for traceability throughout the supply chain, making sure that plants and plant products – such as wood or isolated bark – can be traced throughout their lifecycle and that

there is accountability for those that transport and store organic materials.

A Plant Passport helps to ensure that a plant or plant product complies with the plant health requirements, especially an absence of pests, and helps to maintain biosecurity within the UK. Any plant that is transported within the UK or imported to the UK requires a Plant Passport to ensure that it meets these standards to keep the country safe from biosecurity threats.

For plants and plant products entering Pest-Free Areas (PFAs), additional standards beyond ordinary Plant Passports are required. A full list of PFAs in the UK – and the host plants that could potentially carry pests – can be found here for more information.

What's the difference between a Plant Passport and a Phytosanitary Certificate?

A Plant Passport applies to plants being transported within the United Kingdom. It is a national standard that only applies for internal movement within Great Britain or between Great Britain and the Crown Dependencies.

Phytosanitary Certificates is a document that certifies plants that meet international standards for plant biosecurity. These apply to plants being imported into the UK from third countries or being exported to third countries from the UK.

When do you need a Plant Passport?

Any plant that is "for planting" requires a Plant Passport. This means any plant that isn't a cutting, and will be planted in the ground at some point.

The full list of plants and wood that need a Plant Passport for transport within the UK can be found here; this is different from the more stringent list when transporting certain plants into PFAs, and also different from the list of plants and plant products that would

require a Phytosanitary Certificate when importing or exporting plants to and from the United Kingdom.

How to label plants efficiently

When it comes to picking the right machine to deal with your Plant Passport labelling requirements, you have to consider a few things: from the scale of your operation and the speed of your packaging lines; to your labelling and storage requirements. When it comes to high-speed packaging lines on large-scale operations, a machine that can handle the rigours of quick printing and application of labels is the ideal solution.

The Nexus 20 Linear is a machine that can apply labels at a rate that can keep up with the fastest packaging lines, with Cobalt Sentinel technology built into the setup to ensure accuracy throughout the process. Sentinel can verify and validate barcodes to make sure that the right label has been applied to the right product, and that the barcode is readable.

Being able to print individual Plant Passports or Phytosanitary Certificates and then apply them seamlessly at high speeds can greatly increase the scale of your operation, or help to ease the workload on your staff. With the machines configured to capture and store the unique data required for regulatory compliance, you can be sure that your labelling setup is as efficient as it can be.

If you have any other requirements for your plant labelling, get in touch with Cobalt and we can deliver a system that suits your needs.

We can help you automate plant passport labelling

The Cobalt team can provide a consultation to ensure that your setup is as efficient as possible, with print and apply machines built into systems designed specifically for the rigours that come with labelling plants – namely the working environment involving soil and mud, and applying labels to wet surfaces. Our team can design a

system for you that works, regardless of the individual challenges unique to your situation.

Contact the team at Cobalt to find out more about Plant Passport labelling.