

## **NEW ZEALAND – CHINA / FTA – CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN CHANGES**

The New Zealand and China Customs administrations have signed an exchange of letters that rectifies a number of issues with the certificate of origin format under the Free Trade Agreement. These changes, which came into effect on 1 July 2009, should assist the entry of New Zealand goods into China.

The changes agreed are:

- re-titling of the Certificate to ‘Form for the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of New Zealand’ and reference to ‘(see Instruction overleaf)’

- a small textual change to Box 15 (Certification) – ‘...specified in the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of New Zealand’

- ensuring that the overleaf instructions are printed on the back of the face-page of the certificate (these instructions do not require stamping / signing by the certifier)

- allowing for multi-page certificates – requiring the addition of ‘Page 1 of 1’ on a single-page Certificate and ‘Page 1 of \_’ on the face of a multi-page Certificate (with ‘Page \_ of \_’ on successive pages) and

- creating a continuation page format.

The letter exchange also confirms that certifier’s signatures and stamps be consistent with the electronic version submitted to China (thereby requiring Certification Bodies to computer-print their signature and stamp on the certificate of origin) and signatures in handwriting should not be applied or required.

New Zealand Certification Bodies have been advised of the above agreement and are making the necessary changes to their certification systems. The new certificate format should be available from any of the three bodies. New Zealand Customs fact sheet 38 (Exports to China – Certification and Trade Facilitation) will be amended to include the revised certificate of origin format.

Certificates issued by New Zealand in the original format prior to 1 July should still be accepted, but certificates issued in the old format from 1 July onwards will be denied preferential tariff treatment by China Customs.

Issues with transhipped goods being accepted under the FTA and mechanisms for the refund of tariff duty overpaid due to miss-formatted certificates are also being discussed with China Customs. We will relay the outcomes from these discussions as soon as they are known.

New Zealand is also in discussion with China Customs over what use can be made of their Office of Rules of Origin in Shenzhen. We are seeking agreement to use this office as a centralised contact point for inquiries by New Zealand exporters and their clients on issues around preferential entry into China. We are also seeking to link the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s ChinaFTA website to China Customs legislation on this FTA (Decree 175). Together, these measures should improve the transparency and consistency of entry processing under the trade agreement.