



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Importation of Prohibited Items

The Hon. Colm Imbert, Minister of Finance, has taken note of recent commentary on the importation of certain items into Trinidad and Tobago, and the mistaken belief that these import restrictions have only recently occurred.

In the particular case of seeds, it is noted that some persons in the agricultural sector are reportedly of the view that permits have never been required for the importation of seeds, and they apparently believe that this requirement for a permit is something new, intended to force farmers to buy seeds from local suppliers.

However, none of this is true. ***This is not a new requirement.***


For the record, Section 3 of the Plant Protection Act states that *"no person shall import into Trinidad and Tobago any fruits, **planting material**, plant pest, pathogens, plant products; soil, vegetables or any other prescribed articles (hereinafter referred to as "restricted articles") unless he first obtains a permit in accordance with the provisions of this Act or the regulations"*.


This section of the law has been in force since July 1975, and the Plant Protection Act in its Interpretation Section further clarifies that *"planting material includes buds, bulbs, cuttings, grafts, roots, acions, **seeds**, shrubs, trees, vines and any other part of a plant capable of propagation"*.


The reason for this law is aptly demonstrated in the title of the Plant Protection Act, which was enacted *"for the control of diseases and pests injurious to plants"*.

A permit has thus been required for the importation of seeds ***for the last forty-three (43) years***, for obvious reasons, and the Customs and Excise Division is simply continuing to enforce a law that has been in force since 1975.

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