



July 21, 2020

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Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is focusing on the following issues and concerns regarding import permit time frames and standards, including contingency plans for third-country import transit shipments.

Effective immediately, the following will apply at all U.S. ports of entry and for all live animal imports requiring an import permit.

Import Permit Application Timeframes and Standards

- Standard processing times for routine import permit applications for the import or third-country import transit of livestock (including horses), avian and non-pet birds, aquaculture, and germplasm is **7-10 business days** from the day of application submission. Import permit applications will only be processed in the order they are received and are subject to standard processing user fees in accordance with the regulations at title 9, *Code of Federal Regulations* (9 CFR) [part 130](#).
 - Import permit applications for more complex imports not managed by the U.S. ports of entry as well as pet bird imports will take longer to process.
 - When applications are submitted after 2:30 p.m. eastern time, the next business day will be considered "Day 1" of the processing time.
- Additional considerations for imports:
 - While we always do our best to meet every customer's needs, there are times when we cannot provide service within the limited time frame the customer has requested or allowed. In these instances, Veterinary Services (VS) may request the customer to revise their shipment date to ensure receipt of the required import permit prior to shipment. If the importer chooses to ship an animal without an import permit being issued, there may be two potential outcomes:
 1. If the import permit is issued after shipment but before arrival at a U.S. port of entry, the animal may qualify for entry if the animal does fully meet the import requirements per the import permit.
 2. If the import permit is issued after shipment but before arrival at a U.S. port of entry, the animal does not meet the import requirements per the import permit. When possible an import compliance fee can be charged to facilitate the import or it will be refused entry per [9 CFR part 93](#).
 3. If a shipment arrives at a U.S. port of entry without a permit, VS refuse entry per [9 CFR part 93](#).
 - All species: Import quarantine reservation information is not required to submit an import permit application. Service for request must be submitted to the port of entry VS office at least 72 hours in advance.
 - Equine imports: Contagious equine metritis quarantine permit numbers are required before an APHIS import permit is issued.
- Additional considerations for third-country import transits:
 - A third-country import transit is defined as shipments that originate in a foreign country and move through one or more U.S. ports while transiting the United States to a third-country destination.
 - Third-country import transits always involve a port of entry and a port of exit, which may

be the same location or which may involve numerous stopping points.

The live animal commodities in these third-country import transits are not eligible for release into the United States.

- Third-country import transits of live animal commodities must occur under an import permit and meet one of the following conditions per [9 CFR part 93](#):
 1. Maintained under continuous confinement and APHIS oversight onboard a conveyance until export; OR,
 2. Off-loaded and maintained under continuous confinement and APHIS oversight at an APHIS pre-approved holding facility while awaiting a connecting conveyance, and then loaded and maintained under APHIS oversight onboard the connecting conveyance until export, if qualified.
- If a shipment can't meet one of the above conditions for any reason (including unavailability of an approved holding center), or is not qualified, then a "transit" designation will not be allowed and the shipment must be imported, and then re-exported from the United States. The re-export must comply with [9 CFR part 91](#), with paperwork needed for the re-export dependent on the animal health requirements of both the country of origin as well as the country of final destination.
- All third-country import transits through the United States must be arranged to use the shortest, most direct route possible for animal movement. The route of travel must be documented on the import permit application for APHIS review and approval.
- All third-country import transit shipments are required to provide a written contingency plan to APHIS for approval with the import permit application and prior to import. Please note that import permit applications will not be processed until the complete contingency plan is received. This plan must include measures that address:
 1. Emergency contacts/points of contacts (to include veterinarians)
 2. Transport conveyances/containers
 3. Loading densities and space requirements
 4. Holding facility arrangements/rest stop arrangements
 5. Environmental/weather protections
 6. Effective ventilation/air supply
 7. Safe feed and water supply
 8. Sick/injured animal management
 9. Deceased animal management

Amendments/Changes to Import Permits

Requests to amend an import permit must be made at least **5 business days** in advance of the estimated shipment date. Amendment requests are only processed in the order they are received. If there is a change in any of the following areas, an amendment will be required:

1. Route of travel
2. Port of entry
3. Increase in number of animals imported
4. Replacement of individually identified animals imported (when specific animals are listed)
4. Consignee/Consignor
5. Port of embarkation

If the flight information changes or there is a delayed date of arrival (still within the validity of the import permit), but all remaining information remains the same, an amendment to the import permit is not required. However, the updated flight information and date of arrival **must be submitted** to the port of entry office as soon as possible, to ensure adequate coverage will be available. If coverage is not available, a revised shipping date may be requested.

For further information about import permit requirements please visit the following website: [USDA APHIS VS Live Animal Imports](#).

For questions or concerns, please contact VS Strategy and Policy, Live Animal Imports at

VS.Live.Animal.Import.Export@aphis.usda.gov or at the following phone number (301)-851- 3300.