

For More Information

For local help from VRS, please consult the next section to find the office nearest you. To learn more about VRS, please visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov or call VRS headquarters at 301-734-7633. To find out what animal products are allowed into the United States, please visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/apm.pdf.

Offices Where APHIS AQI-VMOs Are Located, Nationwide

■ **Alabama and southern Florida**
(includes the counties of Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie)
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
5600 NW 36th Street, Rm. 271
Miami, FL 33166

■ **Alaska, Guam, and Hawaii**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
375 Rodgers Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96819
Office: (808) 834-3206
Fax: (808) 834-3207

For mail only:
P.O. Box 630476
Miami, FL 33163

Office: (305) 526-2700
Fax: (305) 526-2701

■ **Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and the western tip of Texas**
(includes Counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, and Presidio)
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
3658 East Chipman Road
Phoenix, AZ 85040
Office: (602) 431-8930, Ext. 210
Fax: (602) 438-0877

■ **Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, and maritime ports Texas**
(includes counties of Aransas, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Victoria, and Wharton)
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
11811 East Freeway (I-10 East), Suite 560
Houston, TX 77029
Office: (713) 393-1014
Fax: (713) 393-1024

■ **California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
11840A South La Cienega Blvd.
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Hawthorne: (310) 725-1949
Hawthorne Fax: (310) 725-9515
Long Beach: (562) 628-8999
Long Beach Fax: (562) 499-6061

■ **Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Federal Bldg.
10 Causeway Street, Rm. 438
Boston, MA 02222
Office: (617) 742-0430
Fax: (617) 742-0437

■ **Delaware, the majority of New Jersey** (excludes counties covered by the AQI-VMO in Albany, NY), **Ohio, and Pennsylvania**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
2d and Chestnut Streets
Custom House, Rm. 212
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2910
Office: (215) 597-2339
Fax: (215) 597-2338

■ **Florida, northern and central** (excluding counties covered by the AQI-VMO in Miami), **and Mississippi**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
9951 Atlantic Blvd., Suite 177
Jacksonville, FL 32225
Office: (904) 725-2960
Fax: (904) 725-2948

■ **Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
1498 Klondike Road, Suite 200
Conyers, GA 30094
Office: (770) 922-9784
Fax: (770) 922-6311

■ **Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
835 S. 192d Street, Suite 1600
Seatac, WA 98148
Office: (206) 878-6617
Fax: (206) 870-8043

■ **Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
2300 East Devon Ave., Suite 122
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Office: (847) 299-6939 x236
Fax: (847) 299-6046

■ **Indiana and Michigan**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
International Terminal, Rm. 228
Detroit Metro Airport
Detroit, MI 48242

For mail only:
P.O. Box 42735
Detroit, MI 48242-0735

Office: (734) 942-7042
Fax: (734) 942-7409

■ **Kansas, most of Texas** (excluding counties covered by AQI-VMOs in Houston and Phoenix), **and Oklahoma**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
903 San Jacinto Blvd., Suite 270
Austin, TX 78701-2450
Office: (512) 916-5241
Fax: (512) 916-5243

■ **Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
Norfolk Federal Building
200 Granby Street, Suite 102
Norfolk, VA 23510
Office: (757) 441-6290
Fax: (757) 441-6651

■ **New York and northern New Jersey** (includes counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union, and Warren)
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
500 New Karner Road, 2d Floor
Albany, NY 12205
Office: (518) 869-5673
Fax: (518) 869-5675

■ **Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands**
USDA-APHIS-PPQ
654 Muñoz Rivera Ave., Suite 700
Hato Rey, PR 00918
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Fax: (787) 294-1674

■ **PPQ, Veterinary Regulatory Support Headquarters**
Riverdale, MD
USDA-APHIS-PPQ-VRS
4700 River Road, Unit 129
Riverdale, MD 20737-1236
Office: (301) 734-7633
Fax: (301) 734-8538



An AQI-VMO and CBP inspector examine the contents of passenger baggage for restricted agricultural commodities.

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Cover photo: A veterinary medical officer with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (AQI) program examines an agricultural product from a foreign vessel cargo shipment to ensure that it complies with APHIS regulations. [Photo taken by Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) employee John Bissett.]

Photo credits: PPQ employee JoAnne Botte took the photo of the inspector checking label contents on a can. PPQ employee Dr. José Lozada took the picture of the AQI veterinary medical officer and the Customs and Border Protection inspector examining passenger baggage. All the remaining images were taken by APHIS photographer R. Anson Eaglin.

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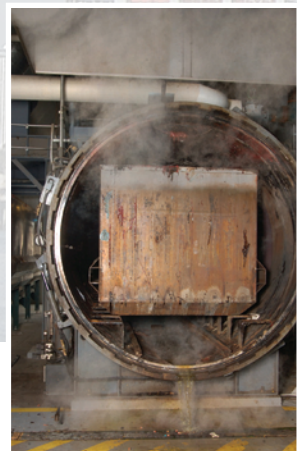
APHIS' Veterinary Regulatory Support Program

Ensuring the Health and Quality of America's Animal Agriculture



APHIS' Veterinary Regulatory Support Program

When you think about the risk of introducing foreign animal pests and diseases into the United States, you probably think that the risk comes only from live animals. However, animal-derived products, such as fresh meat, pose just as great a threat to American livestock. For this reason, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) created its Veterinary Regulatory Support (VRS) program in 2001 under its Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) unit. VRS is a team of veterinarians and administrative support personnel who are committed to keeping foreign animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, out of the country by regulating the importation of animal-derived materials.



AQI-VMOs with the VRS program and PPQ Plant Health Safeguarding Specialists certify and monitor steam sterilizers like this one, to make certain that they comply with APHIS regulations. These sterilizers are used to disinfect international garbage, killing harmful plant and animal pests and diseases.



An AQI-VMO and a CBP agricultural specialist search APHIS' Animal Product Manual to determine if the product found in an airline passenger's baggage can be allowed into the United States.



Prohibited meat seized at a U.S. mail facility.



An AQI-VMO translates foreign labels of seized commodities, looking for prohibited ingredients.

Since the establishment of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003 to create a consolidated border-inspection organization, DHS' partnership with APHIS is extremely important in our exclusion efforts at America's borders. Although DHS' Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is responsible for protecting our Nation's borders, APHIS continues to determine what agricultural products can come into the country and what products pose a risk and should be kept out. APHIS' VRS program provides scientific advice and expertise to CBP regarding APHIS regulations for importing animal products and byproducts, international garbage, and related materials. VRS also serves as the liaison between CBP and other government agencies on matters related to the regulation of imported animals and animal materials.

The Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Veterinary Medical Officer

Although VRS is headquartered in Riverdale, MD, it has a field staff of Agriculture Quarantine Inspection field Veterinary Medical Officers (AQI-VMOs) strategically assigned throughout the United States and its territories. These VMOs are located where the concentrations of foreign cargo activity and international travelers are highest.

These veterinarians provide regional oversight for operational procedures designed to prevent the introduction of infectious, contagious, or communicable diseases of livestock into the United States through imported animal products and byproducts and related materials. AQI-VMOs provide a wide range of important services. With reference to animals, animal byproducts, and related materials, these VMOs:

- Collaborate with officials in CBP, APHIS-PPQ, and USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to ensure appropriate and consistent handling of animal materials and international garbage at U.S. ports-of-entry.
- Provide veterinary expertise that bridges the technical gap between the foreign animal disease exclusion regulations, established by APHIS' Veterinary Services (VS) National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), and the enforcement requirements for the implementation of these regulations, carried out by DHS-CBP officers at U.S. ports-of-entry.
- Develop, in their geographic areas of responsibility, effective communication links with VS-NCIE, CBP, FSIS, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State veterinary authorities, industry groups, and others dealing with animal disease exclusion activities at U.S. ports-of-entry.



Although inspections like the one that netted this illegally imported material are now performed by DHS employees, APHIS still establishes, maintains, and enforces all regulations governing the import and export of certain agricultural products.

- Provide technical advice and assistance in evaluating the risk of introducing foreign animal diseases into the United States through the importation and movement of specific animal products and byproducts and foreign garbage.
- Evaluate the effectiveness, supervision, and operation of APHIS' import-export program.
- Conduct and participate in seminars and local conferences and provide expertise on APHIS' import and disease-exclusion regulations.
- Review, evaluate, and provide feedback on import-export certification procedures for these materials and regulated activities at U.S. ports-of-entry.
- Develop compliance agreements in accordance with APHIS' regulations for companies handling and processing international garbage. APHIS regulates the importation of garbage that may pose a risk of introducing or disseminating animal or plant pests that are new or not widely distributed within the United States.