

## The New York Animal Import Center

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for safeguarding American agriculture from foreign pests and animal diseases. Through its Veterinary Services (VS) program, APHIS works to keep foreign animal diseases out of the country and to eliminate or control domestic animal diseases and prevent their spread.

VS regulates the importation of animals and animal-derived materials to ensure that exotic animal and poultry diseases are not introduced into the United States. Animals that are susceptible to or are capable of carrying diseases or pests that could seriously endanger U.S. domestic livestock or poultry must be imported through a U.S. animal import center.

### Quarantine: A Crucial Part of the Animal Import Process

What do kudus, bongos, dikdiks, and blackbacked duikers have in common? Besides being African mammals, representatives of each type have, at one time or another, moved through ports in New York and New Jersey and been quarantined at APHIS' New York Animal Import Center in Newburgh, NY. Located at Stewart International Airport, the 20-acre site operated by VS opened in March 1980, and is guarded and located in a secure, fenced area.

The quarantine of livestock—at the Newburgh facility and other U.S. animal import centers—is an important part of our Nation's animal import process. Other key activities APHIS officials carry out in this process include: developing import protocols with exporting countries; monitoring disease prevalence and occurrence internationally; reviewing and issuing import permits; establishing transportation and quarantine requirements; conducting applicable diagnostic tests, and notifying those States receiving animals released from quarantine.

### A Parade of Animals

From October 1, 2005, through September 20, 2006, approximately 4,000 horses, nearly 2,300 birds, as well as many other animals, passed through the New York Animal Import Center. When entering the United States, animals, poultry, and other birds must have an import permit and health certificate. The permit

shows what types of animals are being imported, their country of origin, who is exporting them, who is importing them, their ports of embarkation and arrival, their route, their mode of travel, and the purpose for which they are being imported.

This information is important because it allows import center employees to identify each animal and track it through the import process. Accompanying health certificates show that the imported animals were inspected before they left their country of origin and that they received the proper diagnostic examination and treatment for entry into the United States.

When an animal shipment arrives either by plane or ship at the ports of New York or New Jersey, an APHIS port veterinarian conducts a preliminary examination. The veterinarian also checks the identification of the animals, the health certificates, and permits. The animals then are transferred to a truck that takes them directly to the New York Animal Import Center. If any information is lacking—such as residence, health documentation, and pre-export history—the animals are refused entry and held at the Center until the problem is corrected. If the problem cannot be corrected, the animals are returned to their country of origin.

At the Center, veterinarians again check the animals' identification and various papers. Animals receive a thorough examination and are sprayed to eliminate external parasites. Finally, the animals are isolated and begin their quarantine. Depending upon their origin and their species, animals are quarantined for a period of 3, 7, 30, or 60 days. The quarantine period allows APHIS staff to observe the animals for signs of disease and to conduct diagnostic procedures. For example, birds are held in isolation for a period of 30 days. If, at the end of that time, they show no signs of disease, meet all requirements of the import protocol, and pass diagnostic testing, they are released to the importer or a designated agent.

### Housing Animals

The New York Animal Import Center consists of 18 buildings, 14 animal barns, and a fenced compound. Cattle, horses, birds, waterfowl, and zoo animals are each housed in different barns designed specifically for them. The barns are separated by 100 feet of open space, and each barn is equipped with a ventilation system that prevents the spread of airborne infection. The largest horse barns can accommodate 38 horses; the Center can accommodate a total of 125 horses.

### **Biosecurity is a Top Priority**

Once animals are admitted to the quarantine building, they remain within a biologically secure unit.

Visitors are generally restricted access to only office and grounds areas and are prohibited from entering biologically secure areas. In order to ensure biosecurity, all persons who are permitted entry into a secure area must shower first, wear government-issued clothing, and shower again upon exiting. Persons entering several different quarantine areas must wash their boots in a chemical footbath and change coveralls prior to entering and leaving the different areas. Depending on which barns they are entering, they may also be required to shower again before entering a different barn.

### **Import Permits**

To obtain an import permit for the port of New York and to reserve space at the New York Animal Import Center, applicants must complete form VS 17–129 and return it with the appropriate reservation fee. The reservation fee equals the full total of all anticipated quarantine charges. A list of fees as well as the necessary forms are available and may be obtained from the Center.

To make arrangements to import animals through the New York Animal Import Center or to obtain a list of user fees, contact:

USDA, APHIS, VS

New York Animal Import Center

200 Drury Lane

Rock Tavern, NY 12575

Phone: (845) 564–2950

Fax: (845) 564–1075 or visit the VS

Web site at <<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs>>.

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