

# USDA Delays Implementation of Additional Requirements on the Importation of Eight Species of Live Fish into the United States

On Sept. 27, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a notice in the *Federal Register* that delays the implementation of an interim rule from Aug. 30 that established additional import requirements on the following eight species of fish entering the United States: common carp (including koi); grass, silver, bighead, and Crucian carp; goldfish; tench; and sheatfish. This delay is 30 days in length and expires Oct. 30.

APHIS is taking this action to ensure that importers and foreign parties have enough time to adjust to the regulatory changes.

APHIS created these regulations because the above fish species are susceptible to spring viremia of carp (SVC). SVC is an extremely contagious viral disease of carp and certain other fish species. The requirements set forth in the original rule are necessary to prevent further introductions of SVC into the United States.

In recent years, outbreaks of SVC in farmed fish have been attributed to importing SVC-susceptible species that were not tested for this disease before entering the United States. Outbreaks of SVC confirmed in the United States in 2002 and 2004 were eradicated at considerable expense. The United States is now presumed to be free of SVC in farmed fish.

Under the new regulations, these species of fish and their fertilized eggs and gametes may be imported into the United States if they are accompanied by a Veterinary Services (VS) Form 135 and an official health certificate from the exporting country.

The health certificate must be signed by a veterinary medical officer from the exporting country and must indicate that the country is free from SVC. Both of these mechanisms will help ensure that the United States is not importing fish whose health or disease status has not been determined. A statement of cleaning and disinfection is also required for shipping containers.

These commodities may also transit the United States on their way to a third country if accompanied by an import permit and if certain conditions are met to ensure that SVC is not introduced or spread to any U.S. fish populations. A health certificate is not required for transiting fish of these species.

Complete details on importing live fish species susceptible to SVC and the delay in implementation of the new regulations can be viewed at <<http://www.regulations.gov>>. The rule also contains details about the limited U.S. ports-of-entry through which SVC-susceptible fish and their fertilized eggs and gametes may be imported.

An import permit application (VS Form 129) is available on the internet at <[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/pdf/vs17\\_129.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/pdf/vs17_129.pdf)>. Instructions for this form are located at <[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/pdf\\_files/vs17-129-cover.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/pdf_files/vs17-129-cover.pdf)>.

**Note to Stakeholders:** Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> and click on the "Publications" button. For additional information regarding import requirements on live fish species susceptible to SVC, contact the National Center for Import and Export at (301) 734-8364 and ask to speak with an aquaculture specialist.

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