

Enforcing APHIS Regulations

Within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) staff works diligently to ensure the health and care of the animals and plants under its jurisdiction. IES helps the animal and agricultural industries achieve compliance with APHIS regulations. Compliance is accomplished through comprehensive investigations, sound enforcement, and strong educational efforts.

IES contributes to the overall APHIS mission, the protection of American agriculture, by:

- Investigating alleged violations of APHIS-related Federal laws and regulations;
- Maintaining investigative case records;
- Coordinating efforts throughout APHIS, USDA, and cooperating agencies to resolve violations of agricultural health laws;
- Establishing a centralized enforcement resource system;
- Gathering and sharing information on violations and violators; and
- Training APHIS inspectors to collect evidence for possible investigations.

Investigative Services

The field investigative unit was established in 1988 to consolidate the efforts of all APHIS investigators. To achieve a high degree of compliance with APHIS regulations in the field, the 80-member investigative unit operates from two regional offices, one located in Raleigh, NC, and the other in Fort Collins, CO. IES' primary clients in APHIS are the Animal Care, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, Plant Protection and Quarantine, and Veterinary Services programs.

IES investigators gather information and evidence about all alleged violations of agricultural health and animal welfare regulations. The investigators ensure that all cases are documented and tracked appropriately to assist processing at the agency and Department.

Enforcement Services

When IES investigators look into apparent violations, they prepare case reports. If a case warrants prosecution, APHIS takes legal action, usually through an administrative law process. Many cases

are closed with an official warning, but sometimes IES issues stipulations that may include a civil fine or other penalty. The more serious cases or those involving repeat violations are submitted to an administrative law judge who can suspend or revoke the violator's USDA license and impose a fine. If a violation is serious enough, IES will work with the Department of Justice to build a criminal case.

IES investigates violations of:

- The Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act;
- Agricultural import rules that prevent the introduction of exotic plant and animal pests and diseases into the United States;
- Rules pertaining to exports of agricultural products from the United States;
- Quarantine rules that restrict the interstate movement of certain agricultural products;
- Standards that control the quality of veterinary biological products;
- Sanitary standards for garbage and food that is fed to swine; and
- Standards for accredited veterinarians working in Federal/State cooperative programs.

Information Services

IES maintains all information about violations of agricultural health and animal welfare laws in a centralized system at the APHIS headquarters in Riverdale, MD. Compliance specialists in IES can access information about cases and provide program officials with legal insight into APHIS regulations. The enforcement staff can also create historical and general legal reports for field research and other APHIS programs.

Training

Many IES investigators have agricultural and law enforcement backgrounds and have worked with APHIS previously in program delivery. Investigators are trained at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, GA, to monitor possible unlawful activities and gather evidence about them. Upon completion of training in Glynco, IES investigators can provide training to other APHIS employees and cooperators. This training includes techniques for collecting evidence, preparing written statements, conducting interviews, and enforcing APHIS regulations.

IES also authorizes APHIS employees other than investigators to administer oaths and take affidavits in the field. The authorizations enable these other employees to gather useful evidence of possible violations.

How To Contact IES

For more information regarding IES activities, please visit our Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/ies or contact us at:

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