

**Questions and Answers
Veterinary Services
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Questions and Answers: USDA's Finalized Import Certification Regulations for Live Bovine Animals and Bovine Products

On September 18, 2007, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published a final rule amending the regulations for the importation of live bovine animals, bovine products, and byproducts from regions that pose a minimal risk of introducing bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States. The final rule establishes science-based provisions for safe trade with countries designated as minimal-risk countries for BSE while continuing to protect American agriculture. Canada is currently the only country designated by USDA as a minimal-risk country. The rule finalized the proposed rule that the USDA published in the *Federal Register* on January 9, 2007.

Q. What commodities are allowed for import from Canada to the United States under the final rule?

- A. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is allowing the import of:
- Live cattle and other bovines (including bison) for any use (including breeding) born on or after March 1, 1999, which APHIS has determined to be the date of effective enforcement of Canada's ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban;
 - Blood and blood products derived from bovines, collected under certain conditions; and
 - Casings and part of the small intestine derived from bovines.

The first Minimal Risk Regions rule—published as a final rule in January 2005—allowed the importation of Canadian bovine meat and meat products of any age; however, subsequent to its publication, USDA delayed the applicability of the provisions within the 2005 final rule that dealt with meat and meat products from animals 30 months of age or older.

With the publication of the recent final rule in September 2007, the delayed provisions have been lifted, and the importation of these meat and meat products now can occur.

Q. When did this rule become effective?

A. The rule became effective on November 19, 2007.

Q. Are bovine of any age allowed entry into the United States?

A. Under the final rule, cattle and bison born on or after March 1, 1999, are eligible for entry for any purpose.

Q. Can pregnant cattle and bison animals be imported for both feeding and immediate slaughter?

A. Yes. Pregnant cattle and bison for any use, born on or after March 1, 1999, are allowed entry.

Q. Are breeding sheep and goats allowed entry from Canada into the United States?

A. No. This rule did not address the entry of sheep or goats for breeding; that will be addressed in separate rulemaking. The entry requirements for sheep and goats have not changed. Sheep

and goats from Canada can only move direct to slaughter and to a designated feed lot, must not be pregnant, and must be under 12 months of age when they are imported and slaughtered.

Q. Can pregnant Canadian sheep and goats be imported into the United States?

A. Pregnant sheep and goats from Canada are still not allowed entry into the United States.

Q. Are there any breeds of cattle, bison, sheep, or goats that are prohibited entry?

A. No. All breeds of cattle, bison, sheep, or goats are eligible for entry.

Q. Can camels, llamas, alpacas, vicunas, and guanacos be imported from Canada?

A. Llamas, alpacas, and other camelids are eligible for entry for any purpose if accompanied by an official Canadian health certificate and presented for inspection at a U.S.-Canadian border port listed in Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 93.403 (b).

Q. Can deer, elk, and other cervids be imported from Canada?

A. Deer, elk, and other cervids are eligible for entry for any purpose if accompanied by an official Canadian health certificate and presented for inspection at a U.S.-Canadian border port listed in 9 CFR section 93.403 (b).

Q. Is branding required for cattle and bison if not imported for immediate slaughter?

A. All cattle and bison imported for any purpose other than immediate slaughter must be branded. The permanent brand identification must be applied to each animal's right hip, high on the tail-head (over the junction of the sacral and first coccygeal vertebrae). It must be no less

than 2 inches high and no more than 3 inches high. Alternatively, a CAN tattoo may be applied to the inside of the left ear.

Q. Do sheep and goats imported for immediate slaughter or as feeder sheep and goats have to be permanently identified?

A. No, only sheep or goats destined for feedlots must be permanently identified with a distinct “C” brand.

Q. For sheep and goats requiring a brand, can the “C” mark be applied anywhere?

A. The brand must be properly applied with a freeze brand, hot iron, or other method and must be easily visible on the live animal and on the carcass before skinning. No specific location of the permanent identification is defined. This brand must be no less than 1 inch high and no more than 1-1/4 inch high. Improperly applied brands, hair brands, or anything that does not result in a permanent mark is not acceptable.

Q. Is official eartag identification still required for cattle and bison?

A. Yes. An official Canadian eartag is required for all cattle and bison imported for any purpose, and it must be listed on the official Canadian health certificate.

Q. Can bangle tags be used as the official means of identification?

A. Bangle tags that are approved as an official Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) form of animal identification are acceptable. Bangle tags purchased at feed stores or through tag companies and that are either blank or have producer numbers are not acceptable. Further information regarding

the Canadian Animal ID Program can be found at:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/surv/idente.shtml>.

Q. Do shipments of sheep and goats still need to be sealed at the Canadian premises of export with Canadian seals prior to arriving at U.S. ports of entry?

A. Yes, shipments of sheep and goats for all purposes must be sealed with official Canadian seals at the Canadian export premises prior to arriving at U.S. ports of entry.

Q. If shipped to slaughter before the final rule's effective date, are cattle or bison that are already in a U.S. feedlots required to be shipped to slaughter on a VS Form 1-27?

A. Yes, prior to the effective date of the final rule, cattle in U.S. feedlots will still be required to follow the previous regulations and must be shipped to slaughter on a VS Form 1-27 in a sealed conveyance.

Q. If shipped to slaughter after the final rule's effective date, are cattle or bison that were in U.S. feedlots prior to the effective date required to be shipped to slaughter on a VS 1-27?

A. No. After the effective date, cattle imported into U.S. feedlots prior to the effective date will be allowed to move without any further restrictions.

Q. Can Canadian exporters transit sheep and goats through the United States to Mexico?

A. No. APHIS does not allow overland transit through the United States of livestock that does not meet U.S. entry requirements.

Q. Can Canadian cattle and bison transit through the United States by sea or air for export to a third country?

A. Yes. Canadian origin cattle and bison may transit through the United States by sea or air for export to a third country. They must be accompanied by both a Canadian export health certificate for the third country and a USDA import transit permit. Additionally, they must travel under seal and undergo an export inspection by USDA at the port of embarkation in the United States.

Q. Can U.S. cattle and bison enter Canada for show purposes and return to the United States?

A. Yes, this movement is allowed if the U.S. cattle or bison are certified for permanent export with an export health certificate endorsed by USDA. The cattle or bison may stay in Canada for up to 90 days and return with this same certification with an inspection at the U.S. port of entry.

Q. Under the final rule, are cattle and bison allowed to be moved from a feedlot to a farm for breeding?

A. Yes. Cattle imported into U.S. feedlots are allowed to move without any further restrictions. This applies to cattle and bison imported both prior to and following the final rule's effective date.

Q. Do shipments of cattle and bison have to be sealed at the Canadian premises of export before arriving at U.S. ports of entry?

A. Shipments of cattle and bison are not required to arrive at U.S. ports of entry in sealed vehicles.

Q. Must shipments of Canadian sheep or goats arrive at U.S. ports of entry under an official CFIA seal?

A. Yes. To enter the United States, shipments of Canadian sheep or goats must arrive at U.S. ports of entry under an official CFIA seal. To ensure the integrity of shipments, the final rule requires that the means of conveyance be sealed and that the seal be documented on the accompanying health certificate.

Q. What happens if the identification numbers for animals in a shipment do not match the identification numbers on the Canadian health certificate?

A. The shipment will be denied entry into the United States. Entry is dependent on APHIS being able to verify the information that has been endorsed as accurate by CFIA.

Q. Who can break Canadian government seals at the U.S. ports of entry?

A. APHIS port veterinarians or inspectors from U.S. Customs and Border Protection can break the seals at ports of entry.

Q. Who can break the seals on trucks at recognized slaughter establishments for cattle or bison moving as direct-to-slaughter animals?

A. The seals can be broken by an authorized USDA representative.

Q. Who is an authorized USDA representative?

A. An authorized USDA representative can be any of the following: an APHIS Veterinary Services employee, a USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspector, a State representative, or an accredited veterinarian. An authorized USDA representative can also be an employee of an accredited veterinarian, slaughtering establishment, or feedlot who is designated by the accredited veterinarian or management of the slaughtering establishment, or feedlot to perform the function involved.

Q. Who is a State representative?

A. A State representative is a veterinarian or other person employed by a State or political subdivision of a State to perform activities that are related to livestock health and indicated as part of the State's Memorandum of Understanding with APHIS.

Q. If a feedlot requests the services of an APHIS veterinarian under the requirements of the final rule, are user fees applicable?

A. Yes, user fees may be applied.

Q. Can a plant employee break the seals on trucks arriving from Canada at U.S. recognized slaughter establishments?

A. Yes, as long as the plant employee is an authorized USDA representative.

Q. At U.S. recognized slaughter establishments, who can break the seals on trucks carrying sheep and goats from a designated feedlot to a recognized slaughter establishment?

A. An authorized USDA representative.

Q. Can slaughter plants without State or Federal oversight process immediate slaughter animals from Canada?

A. No. The final rule requires that slaughter facilities be recognized and be under the oversight of either the State or USDA. Custom exempt or custom kill plants cannot receive immediate slaughter animals.

Q. Who can apply the seals at feedlots for movements of sheep or goats to slaughter?

A. An accredited veterinarian or a State or APHIS official.

Q. Do CAN-branded cattle and bison feeder animals have to be unloaded and inspected at the ports of entry?

A. For feeder cattle, port inspection procedures remain the same. They must be unloaded and inspected at U.S. ports of entry.

Feeder bison from Canada entering the United States through Portal, ND, may be off-loaded and inspected there, after which they are free to move in the United States without further restrictions.

Alternatively, feeder bison shipments presented at Portal, ND, or other U.S. ports of entry may be sealed by APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) personnel and proceed to their U.S.

destination premises, where the bison are then offloaded and inspected by an APHIS veterinary medical officer (VMO). Importers electing this alternative must contact the APHIS area veterinarian in charge (AVIC) in the destination State to arrange for inspection at the destination premises. User fees, including travel time for the VMO, will be charged for premises inspections. Once a VMO has inspected and released feeder bison at the premises destination, they are free to move in the United States without further restrictions.

Q. Are there any specific requirements or approvals required for feedlots receiving imported Canadian cattle and bison?

A. There are no specific licensing requirements, inspections, or approvals for feedlots receiving cattle and bison.

Q. Are there any specific requirements for feedlots receiving sheep and goats?

A. According to 9 CFR section 93.419(d)(8), prior approval by the APHIS AVIC for the State of destination is required. Individuals should contact AVICs to have a feedlot approved. The list of AVICs can be found at the following Web site address:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/iregs/products/vsavic.pdf>

Q. Can State inspected, recognized slaughter establishments process Canadian cattle, bison, sheep, and goats for immediate slaughter from Canada?

A. Yes. The facility must first be inspected by APHIS personnel and approved by the AVIC.

Q. Can State inspected, recognized slaughter establishments process Canadian sheep and goats from feedlots?

A. Yes, provided that the plant management has entered into an agreement with the AVIC.

Q. Are there any special requirements for slaughter facilities that are processing imported Canadian feeder sheep and goats?

A. Yes, slaughter facilities must be a recognized slaughter establishment with oversight by Federal or State inspectors; i.e. they must be a Federal establishment or a State- or USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service-inspected equivalent establishment.

Q. What documents are required to accompany direct-to-slaughter cattle, bison, sheep, or goats moving from U.S. ports of entry to recognized slaughter establishments?

A. The ruminants must be accompanied by a Canadian health certificate endorsed by a CFIA veterinarian; the VS Form 17-30, Report of Animals, Poultry or Eggs Offered for Importation; and VS Form 17-33, Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter.

Q. What documents are required to accompany sheep and goats moving from U.S. ports of entry to designated or approved feedlots?

A. Sheep and goats must be accompanied by a Canadian health certificate endorsed by a CFIA veterinarian; the VS Form 17-30, Report of Animals, Poultry or Eggs Offered for Importation; and VS Form 17-130, Ruminants Imported to Designated/Approved Feedlots.

Q. What documents are required to accompany sheep and goats moving from designated feedlots to recognized slaughter establishments?

A. Sheep or goats must be accompanied by a properly completed VS Form 1-27, Permit for Movement of Restricted Animals; a Canadian health certificate endorsed by a CFIA veterinarian; and the VS Form 17-130, Ruminants Imported to Designated/Approved Feedlots.

Q. How many copies of the Canadian health certificate are required and who retains the original?

A. One original and two copies of the health certificate are required for each vehicle when a shipment is presented for entry. APHIS port veterinarians retain original Canadian health certificates at U.S. ports of entry. One copy travels with the animals to their destination and one copy is sent by port veterinarians to State animal health officials.

Q. Can one original health certificate be used for a shipment of ruminants for immediate slaughter that will be moved in more than one truck?

A. No. One original health certificate and two copies must accompany each truck. The first truck in a shipment with multiple loads should have the original certificate with original signatures. For additional trucks, the certificate can be a photocopy of the original certificate, but it must have an original CFIA red ink stamp. Each truck should have two additional copies of the certificate. For shipments of sheep or goats, the Canadian seal number(s) must be written on the original and one of the two copies.

Q. What does “as a group” for cattle, bison, sheep, or goats moving to immediate slaughter mean?

A. It means, collectively, in such a manner that the identity of the animals as a unique group is maintained. If a shipment of 45 animals is allowed to enter the United States, this same group of 45 must be presented “as a group” for immediate slaughter.

Q. Can bison for all purposes other than immediate slaughter still be imported through ports of entry that do not have unload facilities and be inspected at the destination premises?

A. Yes. The bison conveyance would be sealed at the U.S. port of entry, and VS Form 17-30 and 17-130 would be issued for the movement to the destination premises. Prior arrangements must be made with the AVIC in the State of destination for an APHIS VMO to inspect the bison immediately upon arrival. User fees, including travel time will be charged for feedlot inspections. Once the APHIS VMO has inspected the bison and released them, the bison are free to move without any further restrictions.