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USDA APHIS Extends Updated Interim Guidance for Veterinary Health Certificates through December 31, 2020

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The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to recognize the unprecedented challenge that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic poses to trade. To alleviate the impact on animal origin commodities imports, APHIS provides the following interim guidance to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agriculture specialists assigned to review required import information for animal products and by-products regulated by USDA APHIS. This guidance replaces previous editions that were communicated with CBP.

CBP's agriculture specialists may accept all import documents – including veterinary certificates – uploaded to the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)-Document Image System (DIS) regardless of disease status of the exporting country. ACE is the United States' single window customs system used by CBP to collect information on imports (import declarations). ACE manages DIS to collect scans of documents and requires specific customs brokerage software. Acceptable import documents include veterinary certificates and supporting documents for veterinary import permit requirements.

USDA APHIS continues to require original hard copy veterinary health certificates under the following conditions:

Shipments of high-risk products:

- Bovine serum: fetal bovine serum, newborn calf serum, calf serum, donor bovine serum, adult bovine serum from all countries, and
- Fresh and/or frozen meat and poultry from all countries in situations when the original hard copy veterinary health certificate has not been provided to USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS); if the original certificate has been provided to FSIS, CBP agriculture specialists may accept a copy of the certificate uploaded to ACE-DIS.

Shipments arriving in the United States without a veterinary health certificate, either original or copy uploaded into ACE-DIS, will be refused entry or held until the required documents are received. If there is reason to believe a certificate uploaded into ACE-DIS is fraudulent, CBP

retains the shipment on hold until the original hard copy veterinary health certificate is reviewed.

This guidance is effective for shipments arriving through December 31, 2020.

APHIS will continue to evaluate the situation and provide updated guidance as appropriate.

For information about importing products related to COVID-19 testing, please visit our [website](#). For any questions regarding import of animal products and by-products, please contact Animal Product Imports at 301-851-3300, option 4 or send an email to APIE@usda.gov.