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Export Live Animals to Japan

Last Modified:

Electronic Signature ACCEPTED; Digital Endorsement for SOME COMMODITIES ONLY

For Accredited Veterinarians: Electronic signature ACCEPTED

For APHIS VMO: Digital endorsement for SOME COMMODITIES ONLY

USDA-accredited veterinarians can electronically issue health certificates and use VEHCS (Veterinary Export Health Certification System) to submit them to USDA for endorsement.

Digital endorsement varies by species—see requirements on this page for details. The health certificate either bears the original ink signature and embossed seal **or** digital signature/seal.

What This Means for You

Accredited Veterinarians: Use the links below to access or get help with VEHCS. Learn more about [how to issue export health certificates](#).

Animal Owners/Shippers: Digitally endorsed health certificates can be printed out directly from VEHCS. For non-digitally endorsed health certificates, you can arrange

to have your health certificate returned by mail (a prepaid, preaddressed return label must be provided during certificate submission). A paper version of the endorsed health certificate must accompany the animal(s) during shipment or travel.

[VEHCS Help](#) | [VEHCS Guide](#) (7.58 MB) | [VEHCS Login](#)

Live Animal Export Country Requirements [View Requirements](#)

Summary of Requirements

For all commodities other than the animal commodities listed* below to Japan, USDA Accredited Veterinarians may issue health certificates electronically through the online Veterinary Export Health Certification System ([VEHCS](#)). These certificates will be digitally endorsed by APHIS once received in the system and available for printing by the USDA Accredited Veterinarian once the endorsement is completed by APHIS. An APHIS-endorsed, printed paper copy **must** accompany the shipment.

Health certificates for the animal commodities listed* below, may be submitted by the USDA Accredited Veterinarian through [VEHCS](#); however, the APHIS Veterinary Medical Officer's ink (wet) signature with the application of the APHIS embossed seal must appear on the health certificate. Certificates received by APHIS through the VEHCS system will be printed and endorsed in our offices, and the hard copy will be returned when complete. This APHIS-endorsed and embossed paper copy **must** accompany the shipment.

- * Pet Birds - Commercial (Birds, Non-Poultry)
- Rodents - Research (Research/Laboratory Animals)
- Pet Rodents - Commercial (Other Animals)
- Zoo Mammals - Other than Giraffes or Camelids (Other Animals)

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Equine

- [Horses - Protocol](#) (207.51 KB) - November 2020
- [Horses - Health Certificate](#) (241.7 KB) - December 2024
- [Racehorses - Protocol](#) - March 2025
- [Racehorses - Returning - Health Certificate](#) (543.95 KB) - March 2025

Cattle

- [Bovine - Semen - Health Certificate](#) (55.91 KB) - July 2019
- [Bovine - Semen - Protocol](#) (57.91 KB) - October 2020
- [Bovine - Embryos - Protocol](#) (89.45 KB) - April 2004

Swine

Note: The following certification statements must appear on health certificate for swine and swine semen to Japan:

"There has been no clinical evidence of PED on the premises of origin of the live swine animals for export for at least 12 months prior to the start of export isolation."

Test requirements during export isolation: "PED: PCR test using fresh feces with negative result"

- [Swine - Protocol](#) (22.32 KB) - March 2012
- [Swine - Health Certificate](#) (31.22 KB) - March 2012
- [Swine - Semen - Health Certificate](#) (33.17 KB)

Note: [As of September 24, 2014 additional requirements for PED must be included for swine semen.](#) (311.92 KB)

Poultry

Note: For HPAI related restrictions please reference Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' (MAFF) [site](#).

- [Poultry - Day-Old Birds and Hatching Eggs](#) (314.29 KB)- Protocol
- [Poultry - Day-old Birds and Hatching Eggs](#) (1.45 MB)- Health Certificate
- [Poultry - Bird Quarantine Facility Information](#) (36.29 KB) - Guidance Document

Birds (non-Poultry)

- [Pet Birds - Commercial - Health Certificate](#) (59.11 KB) - March 2017
- [Birds - Poultry/Bird Quarantine Facility Information - Guidance Document](#) (36.29 KB)

Taking a Pet to Another Country?

[Visit Pet Travel](#)

Aquaculture/Aquatic Animals

APHIS Registered Aquaculture Export Facility [approval is required](#).

- [Crustacean - Protocol](#) (154.56 KB) - October 2016
- [Crustacean - Health Certificate](#) (244.76 KB) - October 2016

Laboratory/Research Animals

Note: Research canines and felines must be approved by [Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries \(MAFF\)](#) and listed with current information in order to be allowed import.

- [Rodents - Research - Health Certificate](#) (68.44 KB) - August 2005

Other Animals

Note: Japan has banned the importation of prairie dogs as of March 1, 2003.

- [Honey Bees - From Hawaii - Health Certificate](#) (25.23 KB) - August 2008
- [Camelids \(including Llamas and Alpacas\) - Protocol](#) (182.97 KB) - November 2009
- [Giraffes - Protocol](#) (176.32 KB) - February 2010
- [Pet Rodents - Commercial - Health Certificate](#) (487.04 KB) - October 2008
- [Pet Rodents - Commercial - Facility Requirements - Guidance Document](#) (19.3 KB) - October 2008
- [Canine - Semen - Health Certificate](#) (123.29 KB) - March 2021
- [Zoo Mammals \(Other than Giraffes or Camelids\) - Health Certificate](#) (190.59 KB) - April 2022
- [Ferrets - Commercial - Health Certificate](#) (170.4 KB) - March 2024

Taking a Pet to Another Country?

[Visit Pet Travel](#)

If your species is not listed, the requirements for that species are not known. Exporters who want to ship livestock or germplasm whose requirements are not listed above should have the importer or buyer in the destination country apply for an import permit at the appropriate ministry. This import permit will most likely outline the specific requirements.

Need Help?

USDA-Accredited Veterinarians

Contact a USDA-accredited veterinarian for questions about your destination country's entry requirements for animals (including any needed vaccinations, tests, or treatments); issuance of health certificates; and status updates on certificate endorsement

[Find a USDA-Accredited Veterinarian](#)

Live Animal Industry Team

APHIS Veterinary Services' Industry Team offers commodity-specific expertise for live animal exports. Use the dropdown to contact us with questions about endorsing export health certificates.

- Select a Commodity - ▼

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[All Contacts](#)

Related Resources

- [Frequently Asked Questions About Live Animal Exports](#)
- [VEHCS Login](#)
- [National Veterinary Accreditation Program: Information for Veterinarians](#)
- [Role of the Accredited Veterinarian in International Animal Exports](#)

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Tips for Exporters and Accredited Veterinarians

Endorsement Services

- **No in-person or drop-off services.**
- For fastest processing, have your [accredited veterinarian](#) submit **certificates through [VEHCS](#).**
- Routine APHIS VEHCS processing services are staffed Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Time (CT), excluding Federal holidays. The time listed in VEHCS reflects GMT.
- Paper certificates are discouraged but may be mailed to one of our two paper endorsement offices (see addresses below).

Status Updates

Endorsement offices **cannot confirm delivery or provide status updates.** For updates:

- Contact your [accredited veterinarian](#) (they can check VEHCS status).
- Use your **mail tracking number.**

Important Tips

- Ensure accuracy and submit documents as early as possible within the allowed timeline of the destination country to avoid delays.
- Use **overnight or Saturday delivery** when mailing.

Mailing Addresses

USDA-APHIS
Attn: VETS
920 Main Campus Dr., Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27606

USDA-APHIS
Attn: VETS
10365 Old Placerville Rd., Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95827

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