NVAP Reference Guide: Common Problems Observed on Certificates for Live Animal Movement

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NVAP Reference Guide: Table of Contents

Preface

Introduction

Control and Eradication

- Brucellosis
- Johne’s Disease
- Pseudorabies (PRV)
- Tuberculosis
- Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies
- Scrapie
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Poultry

- National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)
- Avian Influenza (AI)
- Exotic Newcastle disease (END)
- Equine Disease

Aquatic Animal

- Aquatic Animal National Health Plan
- Aquatic Animal Health Activities

Animal Health Emergency Management

- Animal Health Emergency Management
- Emergency Response Structure
- National Response Framework (NRF)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- National Animal Health Emergency Management System (NAHEMS)
- Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Plan (FAD PReP)
- FAD Recognition and Initial Response
- National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC)
- Notifiable Diseases and Conditions
- WOAH and International Standards
- Cleaning and Disinfection
    - Importance of Cleaning & Disinfection
    - Cleaning
    - Disinfection
    - Regulation of Disinfectants
    - Safety
- Disease Surveillance
- Laboratory Submissions

Animal Movement

- Interstate Regulations
- Interstate Movement of Cattle, Horses, Swine, Sheep and Goats
- Issuing Interstate Animal Movement Documents
- International Animal Movement
- Issuing International Health Certificates (IHCs) for Live Animal Movement
- Common Problems Observed on Certificates for Live Animal Movement

Animal Identification

- Animal Identification
- Cattle Identification
- Swine Identification
- Equine Identification
- Sheep and Goat Identification
- Fowl Identification
- Compliance and Regulations

Appendix

- A: 9 CFR PARTS 160, 161, and 162
- B: APHIS VS District Offices
- C: State Animal Health Officials
- D: Forms
- E: Other Organizational Information with Contact Points
- F: Web Sites
- G: Equine Teeth and Aging

Health certificates used to move live animals interstate or international must be completed accurately and fully and in alignment with the requirements of the destination state or country.

Incomplete or inaccurate documents, testing, or vaccinations may result in animals being held at ports, confiscated, destroyed, refused entry, or returned to the premises of origin. At the very least, errors can result in unnecessary delays for your clients or patients.

Although APHIS has regulations applicable to the interstate movement of animals, APHIS is not involved in certificate issuance or endorsement of certificates used for these movements, called Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs). Please work with the State Department of Agriculture or the State veterinarian in the state of destination to determine what interstate requirements might exist for the specific animal movement planned.

When live animals (including germplasm) are moved internationally, APHIS does have regulatory authority over the certificates for these shipments, called International Health Certificates (IHCs). The need for an IHC as well as APHIS endorsement of an IHC after it has been issued by a clinical veterinarian is dependent on the destination country's requirements. Known export requirements, including the requirements for export certification and certificates, can be found on APHIS International Regulations (IREGs) website or the APHIS Pet Travel Website.

The following are examples of typical certificate errors that could affect the international movement of animals. If you have any questions, contact your nearest APHIS-VS endorsement office for guidance, and see the links at the end of this section.

- Failure to use the proper health certificate form. Check the APHIS IREGs or APHIS' Pet Travel Website prior to each export to ensure your form is up to date. Please contact your local APHIS-VS endorsement office if you have any questions.
- Failure to include supporting documents such as test results or vaccination certificates (such as a rabies certificate) when submitting a certificate for APHIS endorsement
- Issuing veterinarian not being USDA Accredited in the State where the IHC was issued.
- Issuing veterinarian not having the correct USDA Accreditation credentials to issue the IHC. For example, a veterinarian must be a Category II USDA accredited veterinarian to issue IHCs for birds, horses, livestock, food and fiber animals, farm-raised aquaculture, and zoo animals which can transmit livestock diseases of concern.
- Failure to record a complete name and address of place of origin (consignor) and/or destination (consignee) on the IHC. These must be physical addresses- P.O. boxes cannot be used.
- Missing certification statements. Always download the most recent form available.
- Missing or illegible veterinary signature and date.
- Failure to be timely (health certificate or test results were completed outside the required time period).
- Improper identification of animal, or identification on all documents does not match (examples: physical description of a horse differing between an IHC and an official EIA test form, or a microchip number on a dog differing between an

IHC and an official test result)
- Performing an improper type of test (example: the ELISA test for EIA when the AGID test is required)
- Illegible or incomplete writing.
- Improper correction of mistakes. White-out should never be used on official documents. Issuing veterinarians should line-out and initial any mistakes and contact your local APHIS-VS endorsement office for advice.
- Not enclosing the appropriate user fee with the IHC with certificates submitted for APHIS endorsement. Fees apply for endorsement to all live animal IHCs except those for service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please note certificate endorsement for emotional support animals are not exempt from user fees.
- Improper date formats on IHCs which require specific format (such as IHCs to the European Union, which require all dates to be formatted DD/MM/YY).
- Failure to acquire APHIS endorsement of documents that require it.

Related Links

APHIS International Regulations for Animal Export
APHIS Pet Travel Website
User Fees
USDA Endorsement Offices

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