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Organism and Vectors Guidance and Permitting

Last Modified:

The Veterinary Services Organisms and Vectors (OV) Permitting Unit regulates the importation into the United States, and interstate transportation, of organisms and vectors of pathogenic diseases of livestock and poultry.

The Code of Federal Regulations, in 9 CFR, §122.2 , mandates that “no organisms or vectors shall be imported into the United States or transported from one State or Territory or the District of Columbia to another State or Territory or the District of Columbia without a permit”.

Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant

Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant

Use the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA) to get a summary of all required import documentation, then apply for your VS import permit(s) directly from your VSPA Request Summary!

Watch a short video to learn more about it.

Recent Regulatory Changes

Expand All

Importing COVID-19 Isolates

- USDA **REGULATES** the ***importation into the United States*** of COVID-19 **isolates** exposed to livestock or poultry products (such as eggs, fetal bovine serum, etc). The application is VS Form 16-3 (214.49 KB), available on this web page.
- Please also obtain permitting information from CDC Import Permit Program.
- Additionally, US Fish and Wildlife Service regulates the importation of Vero cells under The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Permits for COVID-19 exposed to fetal bovine serum from countries considered as affected with Foot and Mouth Disease will require BSL3 handling (see "Country Animal Disease Status")
- USDA **DOES NOT REGULATE** the ***interstate movement*** of COVID-19 **isolates.** Use Guideline for No Interstate Transport Permit Required, #1125 for movement of organism between US states and territories.
- USDA **DOES NOT REGULATE** the importation or interstate transport of **HUMAN DIAGNOSTIC SAMPLES** (tissues, blood, etc. suspected to contain organisms). Please obtain permitting information from CDC Import Permit Program.
- Please visit this web page for updates and revisions to the above USDA regulatory information.

VS Guideline 1125: No Interstate Transport Permit Required

Veterinary Services will implement changes to permitting requirements based on Guideline 1125, effective April 15, 2019. The guideline describes allowances for non-

regulated interstate movement of certain materials such as non-infectious materials and materials that have not been exposed to infectious agents. Scroll down to view Guideline 1125 in its entirety.

View Guideline 1125

U.S.-Origin Livestock and Poultry Pathogens Interstate Transport Permit Changes

Organisms and Vectors Permitting made some changes to the organisms excluded from these permits.
Select **FAQ 32** from the **Frequently Asked Questions for Importation and Transportation of OV's** tab below for information.

Permit Condition: Customs Entry Required

A new permit condition will be added to import permits specifying a Customs entry may be required for materials that are not shipped by a commercial shipper. The importer is responsible for fulfilling this CBP requirement, if applicable. The restriction reads: “Imported article (including hand-carried material) may be subject to regulations enforced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection .

Organism and Vector Import Guidance

Do I Need an OV Permit?

(PDF, 332.04 KB)

Use this flowchart to determine if you need an OV permit.

VS-Regulated Livestock and Poultry Pathogens (Partial List)
Excluded and/or Killed Select Agent Pathogens that May Need an OV Permit
Guidelines: Animal Products That Do Not Require an Import Permit

Use these guidelines to import without a USDA permit.

Country Animal Disease Status

Find the USDA-recognized animal health status of particular countries and regions, organized by specific livestock or poultry diseases.

Importing and Transporting Organisms and Vectors

Frequently asked questions

Types of OV Permits

The OV ***does not*** permit select agents, licensed veterinary biological products, non-infected animals or products, intrastate movement, or storage of biological materials. APHIS and other federal agencies regulate the movement of certain materials through alternate permitting programs. Please use the resources under the *Related Links* box to find out more about these program.

Import Permits are issued to allow importation into the United States of: organisms that may cause disease in livestock and poultry, vectors that could carry livestock and poultry pathogens, and/or organisms or vectors that were exposed to animal(s) or animal product(s) outside of the United States.

Interstate transport permits are issued for the receipt of organisms that may cause disease in livestock and poultry, and/or vectors that could carry livestock and poultry pathogens across state or territory lines within the United States.

Permit conditions and restrictions apply as long as the material is maintained. However, permits do not need to be “renewed” for continued storage of material.

New permit	Amended permit	Renewal permit

This is the initial application for an organisms and vectors permit.	An application to revise an existing permit, within the current permit period. An amended permit does not extend the expiration date of the permit.	An application to renew an existing permit for an additional time period. Limited changes may be requested through the renewal application, such as address or contact information, or revisions relevant to the existing material description or its proposed use (e.g. different genotypes/mutations of a virus, or additional use restrictions, etc).
current fee	**current fee**	**current fee**

*Always check with local and state authorities as additional laws or regulations may apply. An OV permit does not supersede any other state or federal regulations. Permits from multiple state or federal agencies may be required.

Applying for an OV Permit

To apply for an OV permit, complete and submit a VS Form 16-3, “Application for Permit to Import or Transport Controlled Material or Organisms or Vectors”. The fastest way to submit a permit is through the APHIS eFile System. See Animal Health Permits for further instructions.

Email apie@usda.gov with questions.

On Hold Shipment?

If your shipment has been placed under quarantine by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or Department of Homeland Security, **follow these instructions.**

For **general questions** please contact the organisms and vectors staff via email at APIE@usda.gov or call 301-851-3300.

Related Links

- Animal Product Import Information
- Division of Agricultural Select Agents and Toxins
- Veterinary Biologics

- Plant Pest and Disease Programs
- Biotechnology Regulatory Services
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Import Permit Program (IPP)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permits

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