Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

Importing Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes into the United States

Last Modified:

New import requirements for species susceptible to Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) per Federal Order DA-2019-01 (1.45 MB). More TiLV fish disease information can be found at Aquaculture Health.



Live fish, fertilized eggs, and gametes of the species listed below may be imported into the United States, provided they meet the following USDA import requirements:

1. Accompanied by an USDA import permit, **AND**
2. Accompanied by a veterinary export health certificate (issued by a full-time veterinary officer or competent authority of the national government of the exporting country), **AND**
3. Enter through, and undergo veterinary inspection at, a designated U.S. Port (see list below).

Susceptible Species

Fish species susceptible to Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC):

- Common carp, including koi carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)
- Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*)
- Grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idellus*)
- Silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*)
- Bighead carp (*Aristichthys nobilis*)
- Crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*)
- Tench (*Tinca tinca*)
- Sheatfish (*Silurus glanis*)

Fish species susceptible to Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV):

- Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*)
- Commercial hybrid tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus x Oreochromis aureus*)
- Red hybrid tilapia (*Oreochromis spp.*)
- Wild tilapia (*Sarotherodon galilaeus*)

How to Import Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes

Expand All

USDA Import Permit

Use the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA) to confirm your live animal import permit requirements. Select the "Live Animals" tab. The VSPA will provide you with a summary of required import documents, including permit applications, certificates, informational letters, and more.

- Live aquatic animal, fertilized egg, and gamete shipments from species susceptible to spring viremia of carp (SVC) and tilapia lake virus (TiLV), must be accompanied by a USDA import permit.
  - At least one import permit is required per shipment of live aquatic animals, fertilized eggs, and gametes from a single country of origin.
  - A single import permit may be issued when live aquatic animals, fertilized eggs, and gametes are imported from multiple farms/ premises of origin located in the same country and travelling as a single shipment.
- Importers should apply for an import permit online using APHIS eFile. This will expedite the permitting process and enable users to track the status of their permits, confirm receipt, and easily renew or amend existing permits. Visit Animal Health Permits to learn more about applying for an import permit, including paper applications.

When completing the permit application, follow the instructions for a single import permit for multiple farms/ premises of origin located in the same country. For each farm of origin, enter the number of animals from that farm in the “name” field, and enter the farm’s address and registration number in the "additional ID information" field. This information should be entered for each farm/premises to be shipped on the same import permit.

- Importers must submit the import permit application at least 7 business days prior to shipping live aquatic animals, fertilized eggs, and gametes.
- An import permit is valid for **30 days** for live aquatic animals, fertilized eggs, and gametes.
- APHIS charges a fee for processing import permit applications and for amending and/or renewing a permit, if applicable.

Veterinary Export Health Certificate

All regulated aquatic animal species (listed above) imported from any region of the world must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by a salaried veterinarian of the national government of the exporting region OR issued by a certifying official and endorsed by the competent authority of that country (unless otherwise indicated).

The health certificate must be written in English OR contain an official English translation. The type of health certificate will depend on the regulated aquatic animal species, disease they are susceptible to, and the region of export.

Fish Susceptible to Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC)

- Model health certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC Susceptible Species (253.86 KB)
    - If a country-specific health certificate is not listed below, shipments may use either this model health certificate OR a health certificate that contains ALL the information listed in the model health certificate.
- Country-specific health certificates:
    - China – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from China (755.03 KB) – effective May 2023
    - England – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from England (755.8 KB) – February 2022
    - Japan – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from Japan (249.29 KB) – February 2023
    - Northern Ireland – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from Northern Ireland (756.76 KB) – February 2022
    - Scotland – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from Scotland (752.84 KB) – February 2022
    - Taiwan – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from Taiwan (232.99 KB) – July 2024
    - Wales – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of SVC-Susceptible Species from Wales (752.44 KB) – February 2022

Fish Susceptible to Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV)

- Model health certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) – Susceptible Species (284.26 KB)
    - If a country-specific health certificate is not listed below, shipments may use either this model health certificate OR a health certificate that contains ALL the information listed in the model health certificate.
- Country-specific health certificates:
    - England – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of TiLV-Susceptible Species from England (1.01 MB) – February 2022
    - Netherlands – Health Certificate for Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) Susceptible Species from the Netherlands (113.83 KB) – August 2020
    - Northern Ireland – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of TiLV-Susceptible Species from Northern Ireland (791.79 KB) – February 2022
    - Scotland – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of TiLV-Susceptible Species from Scotland (788.57 KB) – February 2022
    - Wales – Health Certificate for Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes of TiLV-Susceptible Species from Wales (787.88 KB) – February 2022

Port Inspection

In addition to the USDA import permit AND veterinary export health certificate, all imported live fish, fertilized eggs, and gametes from SVC-susceptible species and TiLV-susceptible species must meet the following requirements at the U.S. port of entry:

1. Shipment must only enter the United States through a designated port where the USDA Veterinary Services (VS) personnel are available to process the shipments.
    - Designated Ports for SVC-susceptible species
        - California: Los Angeles, Otay Mesa, San Francisco
        - Florida: Miami, Tampa
        - Georgia: Atlanta
        - Hawaii: Honolulu
        - Illinois: Chicago

        - Massachusetts: Boston
        - Michigan: Detroit
        - New Jersey: Newark
        - New York: Buffalo-Niagara, New York
        - Oregon: Portland
        - Puerto Rico: San Juan
        - Texas: Dallas-Fort Worth
        - Washington: Seattle, Sumas

    - Designated Ports for TiLV-susceptible species
        - California: Los Angeles, San Francisco
        - Florida: Miami, Tampa
        - Georgia: Atlanta
        - Hawaii: Honolulu
        - Illinois: Chicago
        - New Jersey: Newark
        - New York: New York
        - Puerto Rico: San Juan
        - Texas: Houston
        - Washington: Seattle
    - If live fish, fertilized eggs, and gametes attempt to enter the United States through other, non-designated ports, they will be refused entry by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel.
2. Importers must notify the USDA Port Veterinarian seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the expected arrival of the shipment, to ensure clearance procedures may be expedited in a timely manner.
    - USDA Port Veterinarians may be contacted through their respective VS Area Offices (Animal Imports Port List).
    - A User Fee will apply for port inspections of imported consignments.

- All shipments must be accompanied by:
    - Original valid import permit **AND**
    - Original endorsed veterinary export health certificate **AND**
    - Cleaning & Disinfection Certificate (if applicable)

Additional Information

- **Shipments Transiting the United States** (154.75 KB)
- **Harmonized Tariff Structure (HTS) Import Codes** (158.45 KB)

*Note: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration may have additional import requirements for live aquatic animals. For more information about U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service requirements, please contact them at your local port of entry (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Authorized Ports of Entry) or visit their website (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Information for Importers and Exporters). For more information about U.S. Food and Drug Administration requirements, please contact them via email at FDAImportsInquiry@fda.hhs.gov.

What You Need To Know

- U.S. transits are classified as shipments presented to a U.S. port of entry for conveyance purposes to then be transported to a destination country shortly after.
    - Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits
- Please note that any animals and their germplasm transiting the United States must not transit countries with questionable disease statuses prior to reaching a U.S. port of entry.
- All transits require a contingency plan. Submit your contingency plan with your permit application (VS 17-129 (211.74 KB)) to laipermits@usda.gov. To submit an import permit electronically, visit APHIS eFile.
- If you are applying to import live animals, semen, and embryos, you may submit applications by email to laipermits@usda.gov.

Questions?

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import Permit team if you have questions before you apply for a permit.

For questions about import permits or permit applications:

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Email: laipermits@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

APHIS Port Services

For questions about import inspections at a port of entry, quarantine of animals arriving from a foreign country, or requesting approval as a private animal import quarantine facility, contact APHIS Port Services.

- Select a State - ▼

Loading...

Live Animal Import and Export

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import and Export team for questions about current trade restrictions, or other questions not related to permits.

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

All Contacts
Print