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# **Export Aquatic Animals: RAEF Production Facility Approval**

Last Modified:



## **Countries that Require APHIS Oversight of the Export Facility**

For quick reference, the following countries require APHIS RAEF inspection/approval for at least 1 commodity/end use. Visit the country's International Regulations (IRegs) for Animal Exports page for more information.

Austria  
Argentina  
Armenia  
Australia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Belarus  
Belgium  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
China

Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Croatia  
Cyprus

Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
European Union  
Finland  
Fiji  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Guatemala  
Honduras  
Hungary  
Ireland  
Isle of Man  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan

Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyzstan  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malaysia  
Malta  
Mexico  
Morocco  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
North Macedonia  
Peru  
Poland

Portugal

Romania

Russian Federation

Serbia

Slovakia

Slovenia

South Africa

Spain

Sweden

Taiwan

Thailand

Turkey

Turks and Caicos Islands

Ukraine

United Kingdom (Great Britain)

Facilities that breed, produce, grow, and/or package live aquatic animals on their premises prior to international export must follow the RAEF Production Facility Approval steps below to determine if RAEF inspection/approval is needed.

[View RAEF Process Flow Chart](#)

## **Determine Inspection Requirements**

Follow the 2 actions below to determine if an APHIS RAEF inspection/approval is needed and if so, what type of inspection/approval.

### **ACTION 1: Determine if the importing country requires an APHIS RAEF facility inspection.**

- Each importing country has its own requirements for whether APHIS oversight of the exporting facility is needed. If APHIS oversight is required, this means the exporting facility must be inspected and approved under the APHIS RAEF Inspection Program prior to shipping.

- If RAEF is required, there will be a note under the Aquatic Animal section of the page stating “APHIS Registered Aquaculture Export Facility approval is required for the export of ...” For quick reference, [the following countries require APHIS RAEF inspection/approval](#) for at least 1 commodity/end use.
  - Even if country-specific requirements do not explicitly state APHIS inspection of the exporting facility is required, the facility must be RAEF approved to meet premises freedom requirements prior to shipping. Please see additional information about obtaining verification for premises freedom under “ACTION 2” below.
  - If there are no negotiated requirements posted to the country’s [International Regulations \(IRegs\) for Animal Exports](#) page for the export of a given aquatic animal, then exporters should work with the interested party (importer/broker) in the importing country to contact the appropriate ministry for an import permit or documentation outlining the import requirements. Review the written documentation to determine if the facility has to be “under the oversight of the Competent Authority” or uses similar language, which indicates that RAEF approval is required prior to export.
- If you have questions about exporting a specific aquatic animal to a specific country, please contact [VETS.RAEF@usda.gov](mailto:VETS.RAEF@usda.gov).

## **ACTION 2: Determine the type of testing the importing country requires.**

- Each importing country may have its own requirements for testing prior to international export.
  - Check the country’s written requirements (e.g., health certificate/protocol, import permit, etc.) to see if the aquatic animals must be tested for any pathogens.
    - Some countries allow for pre-export testing of the population intended for export within a specified timeframe prior to shipping, commonly referred to as “test-and-ship.”
      - Check the country’s IRegs web page using the drop-down menu on the [APHIS International Regulations \(IRegs\) for Animal Exports](#) page to see if there are country-specific criteria for testing (e.g., testing within 60 days of export for spring viremia of carp virus).

- If there are no negotiated test-and-ship requirements posted to the country's IRegs web page, then exporters must follow the [APHIS Criteria for Test Negative Status](#) (111.43 KB).
- Some countries require the facility/premises to be free from pathogens of concern for a minimum of 2 consecutive years prior to shipping, commonly referred to as "premises freedom."
  - Check the country's IRegs web page using the drop-down menu on the APHIS [International Regulations \(IRegs\) for Animal Exports](#) page to see if there are country-specific criteria for premises freedom.
  - If there are no negotiated requirements posted to the country's IRegs web page, then exporters must follow the APHIS [Criteria for Establishing Premises Freedom](#) (258.61 KB) which includes testing to meet 95% confidence of detecting the pathogen at an assumed prevalence of 2%, as well as biosecurity, for a minimum of 2 consecutive years.

**Proceed to STEPS 1-5 based on the answers to the scenarios below.**

- No further actions or steps are needed if the country does not require testing for any pathogens, and RAEF approval is not required to export to that country. The exporting facility may begin exporting if the facility can meet the written requirements.
- If the country requires RAEF approval for APHIS oversight OR premises freedom verification for disease of concern, proceed to STEP 1, as follows:
  - If the country does not require testing for any pathogens, but RAEF approval is required to export to that country, then proceed to STEPS 1-5 for the **RAEF Production Facility Approval**.
  - If the country requires "test-and-ship," and RAEF approval is required to export to that country, then proceed to STEPS 1-5 for the **RAEF Production Facility Approval**.
  - If the country requires "premises freedom," then RAEF approval is required to export to that country, and proceed to STEPS 1-5 for the [RAEF Production Facility Approval + Premises Freedom](#).
- If exporting to multiple countries (with different testing requirements) and at least 1 country requires "premises freedom," then follow STEPS 1-5 for the

## **[RAEF Production Facility Approval + Premises Freedom.](#)**

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### **STEP 1: Complete and Submit Pre-inspection Documentation**

To obtain or renew a **RAEF Production Facility Approval**, the facility must complete the following on an annual basis (i.e., every 365 days):

1. Review, complete, and sign the [RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection Package](#) (245.67 KB).
2. Submit the signed RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection Package via email to [VETS.RAEF@usda.gov](mailto:VETS.RAEF@usda.gov), and attach any written requirements as instructed in the package.
3. The APHIS VS Office servicing your area will review the RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection Package. If additional information is needed or there are any questions, then they will contact the facility via email.
4. Once the RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection Package is complete, the APHIS VS Office will complete and sign Part 1 of the [RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist](#) (694.76 KB).
5. The APHIS VS Office will contact the APHIS VS Field Veterinarian in your area and send the RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection Package and RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist prior to the APHIS VS Field Veterinarian scheduling the site inspection.

### **STEP 2: Undergo Facility Inspection**

The APHIS VS Field Veterinarian will contact your facility directly to schedule a date and time for the inspection. During the inspection, the APHIS Field Veterinarian will complete and sign the Part 2 of the [RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist](#) (694.76 KB).

All facility inspections are subject to hourly user fees which include travel to/from the facility, time on-site for the actual inspection, and all time needed to review paperwork before/after the visit.

Once the inspection is complete, the APHIS VS Field Veterinarian will send the RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist to the APHIS VS Office.

### **STEP 3: Initial Review of Inspection Documentation**

The APHIS VS Office will conduct an initial review of Part 2 of the RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist and supporting documentation for completeness. If additional information is needed, they will contact the APHIS VS Field Veterinarian.

Once complete, the APHIS VS Office will countersign the RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist, and send the following to the APHIS VS Aquatic Trade Team for review and final approval.

- [RAEF Production Facility Pre-Inspection package](#) (245.67 KB)
- [RAEF Production Facility Inspection Checklist](#) (694.76 KB)
- Draft RAEF Production Facility Approval Letter

### **STEP 4: Final Review of Inspection Documentation**

The APHIS VS Aquatic Trade Team will conduct the final review of all inspection documents. If additional information is needed, they will contact the APHIS VS Office.

Once the facility's final document review is completed and approval is recommended, the APHIS VS Aquatic Team will update the facility's information on the APHIS RAEF Master Spreadsheet<sup>1</sup> and notify the APHIS VS Office.

<sup>1</sup>The RAEF Master Spreadsheet is an APHIS central database that captures the status of your facility's approval and other details such as the type of RAEF approval, countries and species for which the facility is approved to export, and contact information. When an export health certificate is submitted for endorsement, the APHIS VS office verifies the facility's eligibility by referencing the RAEF Master

Spreadsheet.

## **STEP 5: Receive Approval Letter**

Once STEPS 1-4 are complete, the APHIS VS Office will issue the RAEF Production Facility Approval Letter and send it to the facility via email. This letter will outline the countries and species for which the facility is approved to export.

To maintain facility approval under RAEF, the facility must be inspected and approved every 365 days.

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