



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

August 8, 2019

Veterinary Services

4700 River Rd

Riverdale, MD 20737

Dear ATA Members:

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (USDA, APHIS, VS) has an online electronic system for the creation, issuance, and endorsement of U.S. veterinary export health certificates used for the export of live animals and germplasm (semen, embryos, oocytes) called [Veterinary Export Health Certification System \(VEHCS\)](#). Using a secure server, VEHCS allows electronic issuance and digital endorsement of international health certificates.

Because VEHCS acceptance varies by importing country, we have placed color-coded banners within the [APHIS International Regulations \(IREgs\) Website](#) and [Pet Travel Website](#). These banners will help you determine when APHIS' online system for digital issuance and/or endorsement of export health certificates for live animals and germplasm can be used, as well as the type of signature (digital versus original ink) accepted on health certificates by each destination country.

The IREgs page is where you can find the most current and accurate information on the country-specific requirements for the movement (export) of live animals, excluding pets but including livestock, horses, poultry, aquaculture, and germplasm from the United States to a foreign country. The APHIS Pet Travel Website is where you can find information regarding the movement requirements for privately-owned pets (e.g. dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, etc.) from the United States to countries around the globe. On both websites, at the top of each destination country's page, there will be a color-coded banner indicating the type of signature that country accepts on health certificates from both the issuing USDA Accredited Veterinarian (AV) and the endorsing APHIS Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO). The banner will also note whether or not the embossed (raised) APHIS Seal will be present on the APHIS endorsed international health certificate.

NOTE: A printed paper copy of the completed health certificate must accompany EVERY live animal and germplasm shipment, regardless of how it is issued/endorsed.

(Continued on next page)

Explanation of color-coded banners:

- The **RED** banner indicates that an original ink signature is required from both the AV and the VMO. Certificates **cannot be accepted** through VEHCS for this country.
- The **ORANGE** banner indicates that AVs may electronically sign and issue health certificates through [VEHCS](#). The health certificate **must** then be printed by APHIS and requires a VMO's original ink signature with application of the APHIS embossed seal.
- The **GREEN** banner indicates that AVs may electronically sign and issue health certificates through [VEHCS](#), and an APHIS VMO may digitally endorse. *The APHIS embossed seal of the printed hardcopy is not required when the certificate is digitally endorsed.*
- The **YELLOW** banner indicates the country has varied requirements:
 - For certain commodities (i.e. types of animals), AVs may electronically sign and issue health certificates through [VEHCS](#), and the APHIS VMO may digitally endorse. *The APHIS embossed seal of the printed hardcopy is not required when the certificate is digitally endorsed; OR*
 - For all other commodities, original ink signature is required from both the AV and the APHIS VMO, with application of the APHIS embossed seal.

Please read the information under each commodity heading on the IRegs page for that country to determine which type of signature is accepted.

- The **PURPLE** banner indicates that AVs may electronically sign and issue all animal health certificates for that country through [VEHCS](#). The endorsing APHIS VMO will then **EITHER:**
 - For certain commodities (i.e. types of animals), the APHIS VMO can digitally endorse the health certificate. *The APHIS embossed seal of the printed hardcopy is not required when the certificate is digitally endorsed; OR*
 - For all other commodities, the health certificate must be printed by APHIS and requires a VMO's original ink signature with application of the APHIS embossed seal.

Please read the information under each commodity heading on the IRegs page for that country to determine which type of VMO signature is accepted.

- The **BLUE** banner indicates that AVs may electronically sign and issue health certificates through [VEHCS](#), and the VMO may digitally endorse. Once the health certificate is digitally endorsed by the VMO in VEHCS, the AV **must** print a hard copy and apply his or her ***original ink signature atop the printed digital signature line***, prior to export. *The APHIS embossed seal of the printed hardcopy is not required when the certificate is digitally endorsed, even though an original ink signature is placed over the digital signature by the AV.*

Color-coded banner summary chart:

	RED	ORANGE	GREEN	YELLOW	PURPLE	BLUE
Accredited Veterinarian Signature	Original signature	Electronic signature	Electronic signature	Electronic signature for SOME commodities only (Please refer to IREGs)	Electronic signature	Electronic signature with subsequent original signature after APHIS digital signature
APHIS VMO Signature	Original signature and apply embossed seal	Original signature and apply embossed seal	Digital signature DO NOT APPLY EMBOSSED SEAL	Digital signature for SOME commodities only (Please refer to IREGs)	Digital signature for SOME commodities only (Please refer to IREGs)	Digital signature DO NOT APPLY EMBOSSED SEAL

Respectfully,

Shanna Siegel, DVM, MPH
 Director of Live Animal Exports
 United States Department of Agriculture
 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Veterinary Services - Strategy and Policy