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Bringing Live Animals and Germplasm into the United States From Another Country (Import)

Last Modified:

APHIS regulates the import of specific live animals and germplasm (semen, oocytes, embryos, and cloning tissue) into the United States to prevent the spread of animal diseases. These regulations apply to many species of animals, but not all. Read on to learn how to bring live animals and their germplasm into the United States and the species of animals APHIS regulates.

If you're looking for information about traveling with a pet, visit [Pet Travel](#).

*Note: For import purposes, livestock (including cows, goats, potbellied pigs, and other species) and poultry (including chickens) are **not** considered pets. Refer to the live animal requirements below to bring any livestock or poultry into the United States.*

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[Import and Transit Requirements by Species](#)

Live Animal and Germplasm Imports

An import is a shipment that originates in a foreign country or territory and is shipped to the United States as the final destination. Import requirements for live animals vary by species but may include an import permit, health certificate, import inspection, quarantine, and in some cases, a contingency plan. Some aspects of the import process require payment for services rendered.

Regulated animal semen, embryos, oocytes, and cloning tissue can be imported into the United States **only** from the region where it was collected. Any regulated germplasm shipments need to be routed directly to the United States with no stops except those designated on the import permit.

An importer is someone who brings live animals into the United States from another country for trade. **It is the importer's responsibility to:**

- Determine the [import requirements](#) for the specific commodity you are importing.
- Apply for the necessary import permit(s) via the [APHIS eFile system](#). Allow APHIS at least 7 business days to process a routine live animal import permit application.
- Contact port services about activities related to U.S. ports of entry or Federal import quarantines. Visit our [trade contacts directory](#) to look up your nearest APHIS Port Services office.
- Determine whether the species you are importing is also regulated under the jurisdiction of any additional Federal agencies and contact them. Please see the species-specific import information ([links below](#)) for more information.
- Check the requirements of the [individual U.S. State or Territory](#) to which you are importing.
- View the [Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits](#)
- Find information about [APHIS-recognized animal health statuses of foreign regions](#) for specific animal diseases, pests, or acceptable commodities.

See More See Less

Shipments From Another Country Moving Through the United States to a Third Country (Import Transits)

U.S. import transits are foreign-origin shipments that move through one or more U.S. ports on their way to a third-country destination.

[Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits](#)

- Any regulated live animals and their germplasm transiting the United States must be routed directly with no stops except those designated on the import permit.
- All third-country import transit shipments require a written contingency plan. You must submit this plan with the permit application (VS 17-129) via [APHIS eFile system](#) or to laipermits@usda.gov. The importer is also responsible for submitting the contingency plan to the port of entry with the service request.

Import and Transit Requirements by Species for Live Animals and Germplasm

If the animal species or commodity you want to import is not listed below, it may not fall under APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) regulations, and you may not need a VS permit. For example, canine semen imported for breeding purposes does not need a VS permit. To learn more, visit [Importing Nonregulated Germplasm for Breeding Purposes](#).

However, you may still need a permit from another Federal agency like the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#), or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

[Aquatic Animals](#)



Birds and Poultry



- [Columbiformes](#)
- [Commercial Birds](#)
- [Live Poultry](#)
- [Poultry Hatching Eggs](#)
- [Ratites and Hatching Eggs](#)
- [Zoological Birds](#)

Dogs



- ["Non-Pet" Dogs \(Commercial Sale or Adoption\)](#)
- [Pet Dogs](#)
- [Importing Nonregulated Germplasm for Breeding Purposes](#)

Equines



Ruminants



- Bison and Cattle
- Camelids
- Cervids
- Goats and Sheep
- Water Buffalo and Yaks

Swine



Other Animals





- [Elephants, Rhinos, Hippos, and Tapirs](#)
- [Hedgehogs and Tenrecs](#)

Need Help?

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](tel: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.

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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](tel:301-851-3300)

[All Contacts](#)

[Print](#)