

---

**Importation of Horses from Mexico using Temporary APHIS-Approved and -Operated  
Quarantine Facilities at Land Border Ports**

**1. Purpose and Background**

This document is intended to clarify the conditions under which horses from Mexico may be imported into the United States, using temporary quarantine facilities approved and operated by Veterinary Services (VS). These measures are necessary to re-establish the importation of horses from Mexico into the United States through land border ports that have been closed (or otherwise adversely affected) by security-related issues, while facilities that meet standards for permanent private quarantines or temporary quarantines for special events are not available. This document provides an interim process until VS finds a permanent solution.

This guidance document represents the Agency's position on this topic. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person and does not bind the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the public. The information it contains may be made available to the public. While this document provides guidance for users outside VS, VS employees may not deviate from the directions provided herein without appropriate justification and supervisory concurrence.

**2. Document Status**

Valid until July 5, 2015.

**3. Reason for Reissuance**

Not applicable. This is a new guidance document.

**4. Authority and References**

A. Authorities (*Code of Federal Regulations*):

- 7 CFR 371.4
- 9 CFR 93.306
- 9 CFR 93.308
- 9 CFR 93.313
- 9 CFR 93.323
- 9 CFR 93.324

B. References:

- VS Memorandum 591.72, "Approval of U.S. Permanent Privately Owned Equine Quarantine Facilities and Checklist for Permanent Privately Owned Quarantine Facilities," (9/14/11)
- VS Memorandum 591.58, "Testing of Equidae for Import" (8/22/05)

C. Definitions

In this document, the word "horses" includes horses, donkeys, mules, asses, zebras, and other *Equidae*.

**5. Audience**

VS employees, other affected Federal and State agencies, and affected members of the public.

**6. Guidance**

A. General

- 1) Any facility approved under this guidance document must be leased from VS or otherwise be under direct VS supervision, and will be staffed with VS personnel for the quarantine periods involved.
- 2) Only horses that qualify for a 3-day quarantine period are eligible for importation under this guidance document. Horses required to be quarantined for longer periods as a condition of importation must be imported through permanent quarantine facilities.
- 3) An import permit for each shipment of horses imported under this guidance document must be obtained in advance from the VS National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), Riverdale, MD 20737. Applications are available by calling (301) 851-3300, menu option 2 (live animals), or on the Internet at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/permits/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/permits/).
- 4) NCIE will coordinate with the VS Area Office on the availability of reservation space at the temporary quarantine facility and the availability of VS personnel to conduct the necessary inspections and treatments.
- 5) At least 72 hours before arrival of a permitted shipment of horses, importers must confirm the time of arrival with VS port personnel at the port of entry listed on the import permit.
- 6) Horses from Mexico imported under this guidance document must be quarantined on an "all-in/all-out" basis for release purposes. That is, all horses that enter the quarantine facility at the same time are considered one lot, and none may be released from quarantine until all horses in the lot have satisfied release requirements.
- 7) Importers should contact exporters in Mexico to request that horses be tested in Mexico for equine infectious anemia (EIA), piroplasmiasis, glanders, and dourine before export, and be inspected for the presence of any ectoparasites.

**VS Guidance**

13405.1

Date 07/05/2012

- 8) All horses in any lot that test positive in the United States for EIA, piroplasmiasis, dourine, or glanders will be disposed of in accordance with VS Memorandum 591.58.

**B. Horse Quarantine Facility Approval**

- 1) If the facility is not used for a period exceeding 6 months, it must be re-inspected and re-authorized by VS for subsequent quarantines.
- 2) Only VS or authorized personnel may enter the facility or handle the horses.
- 3) A contingency plan for horses that become ill or die during quarantine must be reviewed and approved by NCIE. The plan should include the names of any private horse practitioners who may attend sick horses at the quarantine facility. The plan should also identify alternative treatment facilities with adequate isolation capacity that may be used during quarantine, and should stipulate an acceptable procedure for the depopulation of individual horses or an entire consignment due to a disease outbreak.
- 4) To receive VS approval for use under this guidance document, the quarantine facility must meet the following construction and other criteria:
  - a. The facility must be located within 5 miles of the nearest border crossing.
  - b. Facilities with solid walls and vector-proof screening should be located a minimum of 200 yards from other containment structures for horses. Facilities without solid walls and vector-proof screening must be located at least 1 mile from any premises with horses in the United States.
  - c. The facility may not be located in any area known to be infested with *Rhipicephalus* ticks.
  - d. The facility must be surrounded by a lockable fence of sufficient height to prevent entry or exit of any animals susceptible to or capable of vectoring any disease of horses, with a single point of entry or exit that remains locked or guarded at all times when APHIS personnel are not present.
  - e. The fence must be posted with bilingual signs (English and Spanish) along each edge of the perimeter indicating that a USDA quarantine is in progress and that no unauthorized visitors are allowed.
  - f. There must be a minimum 10-foot zone without vegetation outside the horse quarantine facility.
  - g. The facility must have enough food and water for the horses in any consignment, and have adequate emergency supplies of food and water available.

**VS Guidance**

13405.1

Date 07/05/2012

- h. The facility must provide adequate shelter from the elements for all horses quarantined there.
- i. Feed and bedding must be placed in vermin-proof storage.
- j. Each horse must be isolated in a separate pen or stall, with adequate space for movement. Each pen or stall must have an easily accessible record card identifying the individual animal. A template record card is included with this guidance document.
- k. Separate isolation areas must be provided for any horses that become ill or are found to have fevers (temperatures exceeding 101.5°F) that do not resolve during quarantine.
- l. The facility must have areas where quarantined horses can be restrained and safely inspected, including areas with stocks used for scratching horses for ticks and spraying with an acaricide.
- m. The facility must have adequate storage for any wastes that may be retained until the horses are released from quarantine. After quarantine is complete, the material may be disposed of as domestic horse waste. Alternatively, waste may be disposed of as regulated garbage before quarantine is complete.

**C. Import procedures**

- 1) The facility must be cleaned and disinfected before the first use and after each quarantine on a per-consignment basis.
- 2) Before export, the Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganaderia, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentacion (SAGARPA) will seal any conveyances containing horses to be imported under this guidance document, and note the seal number on the health certificate.
- 3) The exporter/broker will call VS at a designated number with an estimated time the shipment will arrive at the international border.
- 4) VS personnel will confirm the arrangements made for the shipment's crossing with local Customs and Border Protection personnel.
- 5) VS will escort the sealed shipment conveyance to the approved quarantine facility and unseal the trailer.
- 6) On arrival, horses will be offloaded and inspected. VS personnel will draw blood from each horse for import testing and submit the samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) as described in VS Memorandum 591.58. Sample information should be entered into the VS Process Streamlining system as part of the importation record.

- 7) Each horse will be scratched for ticks on arrival. If animals are negative for ticks, they will be sprayed with an acaricide at that time. Horses with ticks may either be held for an additional 10 days and must re-test negative after that time for piroplasmiasis, or will be refused entry as a lot and must return to Mexico or be disposed of in accordance with VS Memorandum 591.58. [Note: If horses are found to have ticks, the horses and trailer will be sprayed with an acaricide before returning to Mexico.]
- 8) All horses will have temperatures taken by VS personnel on arrival. Temperatures for each horse must be checked daily. All temperatures must be recorded on the individual record cards.
- 9) To be released, horses must have 2 normal temperature readings during the 24 hours before release (these readings must be at least 6 hours apart). Normal temperature is considered 101.5°F or less.
- 10) If nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are administered, a 24-hour washout period after the last NSAID administration must occur before normal temperatures for release can be recorded.
- 11) Horses must remain in quarantine and be observed for clinical evidence of disease for a minimum of 42 hours.
- 12) Horses without evidence of communicable disease and which are free of ticks may be released from quarantine after 42 hours if negative laboratory results have been received from NVSL for EIA, piroplasmiasis, dourine, and glanders, and 2 normal temperatures have been recorded.

## 7. Inquiries

For inquiries, please call the Veterinary Services Texas Area Office at (701) 250-4210/4211 or the NCIE at (301) 851-3300, menu option 2 (live animals).

  
John R. Clifford  
Deputy Administrator



