

USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Strategy & Policy

PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF GOAT AND SHEEP EMBRYOS FROM NEW ZEALAND

Amended October 2019

This protocol describes the conditions required to import embryos from domestic sheep (*Ovis spp.*) and goats (*Capra spp.*) according to regulations found in 9 CFR Part 98.

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1.1. The importer must obtain an import permit from the:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Veterinary Services (VS)
Strategy & Policy (S&P)
4700 River Road, Unit 39
Riverdale, MD 20737-1231

Telephone: (301) 851-3300, Option 2

Fax: (301) 734-4704

Web Site: [APHIS Imports](#)

The application, **VS Form 17-129, “Application for Import or in Transit Permit,”** may be obtained by writing or telephoning S&P, or by downloading it from the APHIS web site: [Animal Health Permits](#)

1.2. An official health certificate is required. The official health certificate must be issued by a veterinarian designated by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), New Zealand and must be endorsed by a MPI veterinarian. The health certificate must accompany the embryos to the port of entry designated on the USDA import permit.

1.3. The embryos must be collected by an embryo collection (EC) team that is approved by MPI, and collected at an embryo collection unit meeting the criteria in Section 2. The embryos were collected, processed, identified and stored in accordance with the recommendations set out in the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and the *International Embryos Transfer Society (IETS) Manual*.

1.3.1. The embryo collection team is a group of competent technicians, including at least one veterinarian, to perform the collection, processing and storage of embryos. The following conditions apply:

1.3.1.1. The team is supervised by a team veterinarian.

1.3.1.2. The team veterinarian is responsible for all team operations which include verification of donor health status, sanitary handling and surgery of donors, and disinfection and hygienic procedures.

1.3.1.3. Team personnel are adequately trained in the techniques and principles of disease control. High standards of hygiene are practiced to preclude the introduction of infection.

1.3.1.4. The collection team have adequate facilities and equipment for collecting embryos;

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1.3.1.4.1. Processing and treatment of embryos at a permanent site or mobile laboratory;

1.3.1.4.2. Storing embryos.

[Note: The processes noted above need not be performed at the same location.]

1.3.1.5. Tests of all donors must be conducted in laboratories designated and approved by the MPI to conduct the tests.

2. **THE EMBRYO COLLECTION UNIT:** Goat and sheep embryos are eligible for exportation to the United States if they were conceived, collected, processed, and stored prior to exportation at an EC unit or facility approved by MPI. The embryo collection may be carried out on the premises where the donor dam's herd of origin is kept, or at any other location, provided that the following requirements are met:

2.1. **Animal holding and breeding area(s).** The EC facility has an area or areas for holding the donor dams and for breeding them (either by natural breeding or artificial insemination).

2.2. **Embryo collection area.** The EC facility has a room or outdoor area for collection of embryos that contains a device or devices for restraining goats and sheep during embryo collection. If the EC area is a room, then the floor, walls, and ceiling are impervious to moisture and disinfection. If the EC area is an outdoor area, then the area has a floor that is impervious to moisture and is constructed of materials that can withstand repeated cleaning and disinfection. If the outdoor area also has walls or a roof, the walls or roof also are impervious to moisture and constructed of materials that can withstand repeated cleaning and disinfection.

2.3. **Embryo processing area.** The EC team utilizes an enclosed room (which may be a separate mobile facility) that is used only for processing embryos. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the room are impervious to moisture and constructed of materials that can withstand repeated cleaning and disinfection. The room contains a work surface for handling the embryos, such as table or countertop that is impervious to moisture. The room also contains a microscope with a minimum of 50x magnification and equipment for freezing the embryos.

2.4. **Embryo storage area.** The EC area has a lockable storage tank that is used only for storing frozen embryos intended for exportation to the United States.

2.5. **Area for cleaning and disinfection or sterilizing equipment.** The EC team utilizes an enclosed room for cleaning and disinfecting or sterilizing equipment used for the artificial insemination or for the collection, processing, or storage of embryos. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the room are impervious to moisture and constructed of materials that can withstand repeated cleaning and disinfection.

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3. THE HEALTH CERTIFICATE MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- 3.1. The name and address of the place where the embryos were collected;
- 3.2. The name and address of the team veterinarian who monitored the collection of embryos;
- 3.3. The date of embryo collection(s);
- 3.4. The identifying information for of the donor dam and donor sire, including breed, age and identification numbers for each animal;
- 3.5. The number of ampules or straws covered by the health certificate and the identification number or code on each ampule or straw;
- 3.6. The dates, types, and results of all examinations and tests performed on the donor dam and donor sire in accordance with Section 4 below;
- 3.7. The name and address of the consignor and consignee;

4. CERTIFICATIONS:

- 4.1. New Zealand is free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and Scrapie. There have been no reported cases of FMD, Scrapie, goat pox, Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia, Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis, Bluetongue, Akabane, Aino, Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and *Brucella melitensis*;
- 4.2. No cases of disease caused by Schmallenberg virus have been detected or reported in New Zealand.
- 4.3. The donor animals were born, raised, and continuously resident in a country recognized by the USDA as free of FMD and Classical Scrapie (List of countries is located in Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 94, Section 94.1).
- 4.4. The donor animals have been part of New Zealand's national flock and have been free of any movement restrictions for the 60 days prior to collection of embryos for export to the U.S. (or for the 90 days prior to collection of embryos for export to the U.S., if donors were imported to New Zealand from any region not considered by APHIS as free from FMD). Paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 describe how the United States defines "part of the national herd" and for what time frame it must be part of the national herd:
 - 4.4.1. If the donor animals were imported from countries recognized by the USDA to be free of FMD, then these animals must have been free of any import quarantine restrictions and able to move freely within New Zealand's national herd for a minimum of 60 days prior to starting the qualifications necessary to begin collecting semen for export to the United States.
 - 4.4.2. If the donor animal was legally imported from a country not recognized by the USDA to be free of FMD, then the donor animals must have been free of any

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import quarantine restrictions and have been able to move freely within New Zealand's national herd for a minimum of 90 days prior to starting the qualifications necessary to begin collecting the germplasm for export.

- 4.5. During the 60 days prior to collection of embryos for export to the United States, the donor dams were not corralled, pastured, or held with animals of a lesser health status or under any restrictions which would have made them ineligible for export to the United States.
 - 4.6. During the 30 days prior to the collection of embryos for export to the United States, the donor dam was inspected by the team veterinarian and found to be clinically free of contagious diseases; and the team veterinarian has provided a declaration certifying this.
 - 4.7. During the 12 months prior to the collection of embryos for export to the United States, there has been no evidence to indicate that the donor dams have been affected with or exposed to bovine tuberculosis (TB) or brucellosis.
 - 4.8. There was no clinical evidence of TB, brucellosis or other infectious disease in any flock located on the embryo collection premises on the date(s) of embryo collection.
 - 4.9. After processing, the ampules/straws were stored in dedicated storage tanks containing embryos for export to the US at a storage facility designated by MPI, and under lock and key until such time as they were placed in the shipping tank and sealed with Government of New Zealand seals.
 - 4.10. The embryos were collected, processed and stored in accordance with recommendations provided in Chapters 4.7 and 4.8 of the current OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code.
 - 4.11. The EC team followed guidelines in the current International Embryo Transfer Society manual for the cleaning disinfection, and sterilization of all equipment that came in contact with embryos or with the media used for the collection and processing of embryos.
5. **TESTING** [Note: for diseases where more than one testing option is indicated in this section, the applicable test or statement should be included on the health certificate. Any required testing results must be negative or fall within specified ranges.]
- 5.1. Tuberculosis:
 - 5.1.1. Each embryo donor must originate from a herd that tested negative to a whole herd test for bovine tuberculosis. For the purposes of this protocol, APHIS defines a 'herd' as any group of sheep or goats held together, without addition and isolated from other animals susceptible to ruminant diseases, for at least 4 months prior to collection. The donors must be tested with negative results during the 4 month isolation period; and tested with negative results a second time at least 120 days after the first test (and after the last collection for export to the United States). [Note: TB testing may be performed using a Caudal Fold Tuberculin test (CFT), defined as the intradermal injection of 0.1 mL of bovine purified protein derivative

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(PPD) tuberculin (2000-5000 IU) into either side of the caudal fold, with reading by visual observation and palpation 72 hours following injection. A negative test result is the total lack of a response that can be seen or palpated. TB testing may be alternatively performed using the cervical test as described in the current OIE Terrestrial Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines.]

5.1.2. Any animal exhibiting a non-negative response to the TB test is ineligible for export to the US.

5.2. If natural breeding or fresh semen was used to fertilize ova to produce embryos for export, then the donor sire met the test requirements of this section.

Note: if artificial insemination is used, a semen export health certificate for the donor male must accompany the embryo shipment. This certificate must show the donor male was eligible to export semen to the United States in accordance with the criteria set forth in the USDA "Protocol for the Importation of Goat and Sheep Semen from New Zealand."

6. **ADDENDUM:** embryos imported to New Zealand that will become donor ewes/ does being collected for embryo export to the United States:

6.1. The ewes/ does must be at least 12 months of age to meet the conditions of 4.6 of this protocol to become donors: "During the 12 months prior to the collection of embryos for export to the United States, there has been no evidence to indicate that the donor dams have been affected with or exposed to bovine tuberculosis (TB) or brucellosis."

6.2. These donor ewes/ does must meet tuberculosis testing requirements as defined in 5.2 of this import protocol.

7. STORAGE AND SHIPMENT OF EMBRYOS

7.1. Containers carrying embryos to be exported into the United States must be sealed by a MPI veterinarian or authorized designee with official seals. The seal number(s) must be recorded on the health certificate that accompanies the embryos to the United States.

7.2. The shipment must be routed directly to the United States with no stops en route other than those provided for on the USDA import permit.

8. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

Importers are advised that individual states may have additional import regulations. It is the importer's responsibility to verify these conditions and to meet them. The importer should contact the U.S. State veterinarian ([State Regulations and Import Requirements](#)) of the destination state to determine these requirements.

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9. ARRIVAL AND INSPECTION AT THE PORT OF ENTRY

- 9.1. The shipment must be routed directly to the United States from New Zealand with no stops en route other than those provided on the USDA import permit. This shipment may not transit a region considered by USDA APHIS to have foot and mouth disease (FMD) as noted on the USDA APHIS webpage:
(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-and-animal-product-import-information/animal-health-status-of-regions>).
- 9.2. Upon arrival at the port of entry, the importer or the importer's agent must present the original health certificate and the original import permit for the embryos to an APHIS inspector at the port.
- 9.3. The shipping container and all straws or ampules containing embryos must be made available for inspection at the port of entry and may not be removed until an APHIS inspector determines that the shipment of embryos meet import requirements and releases them.

10. EMBRYOS REFUSED ENTRY:

If any embryos are determined to be ineligible for importation into the United States upon arrival at the port of entry, the importer or agent must remove them from the United States within 30 days, or the embryos will be destroyed.