

# Procedures for Submitting Equine Serum Samples to the United States for Pre-Importation Testing

## 1. Purpose and Background

This document outlines the procedures necessary for pre-import testing to facilitate importation of horse serum into the United States. These procedures give potential importers test results to aid them in their decisions to import serum from a particular horse into the United States. Tests are for informational purposes only and do not confer the horse or serum's eligibility to enter the United States.

## 2. Document Status

A. Review date: 08/15/2023.

B. This document replaces Veterinary Services Memorandum 591.57.

## 3. Reason for Reissuance

VS is reissuing this guidance to reflect changes in procedure and structure.

## 4. Authority and References

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

[7 CFR 371.4](#)

[9 CFR part 93](#)

[9 CFR part 122](#)

[9 CFR part 130](#)

## 5. Audience

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

## 6. Procedures

### A. Permits

- 1) A permit will be issued to the importer or broker to cover importation of equine serum samples for up to one (1) year. A copy of the permit must accompany each shipment of serum samples.
- 2) To obtain a permit, the importer must submit a [Veterinary Services \(VS\) Form 16-3, "Application for Permit to Import Controlled Material, Import or Transport Organisms or Vectors"](#). Instructions on filling out the form online can be found [here](#).

Please visit the [Animal Health Permit](#) website for instructions on how to apply for a new permit or a permit renewal, or to amend a permit.

- 3) VS Form 16-3 may be submitted by email to [APIE@usda.gov](mailto:APIE@usda.gov) and by mail to:

USDA APHIS VS Strategy and Policy  
Animal Product Import and Export  
4700 River Road, Unit 40  
Riverdale, MD, 20737  
Fax 301-851-2239

Fillable or scanned copies may also be emailed. Illegible applications cannot be processed and will result in significant delays.

- 4) The cost to process each application for a permit is \$150; payment must accompany the request. Payment may be submitted by check, money order, or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, or American Express) in U.S. currency unless the importer or broker has established a user fee account. Please do not send cash.
- 5) Requests for renewal or amendment of permits may be submitted electronically through the Import Authorization System as well as by mail or email. Mailed requests should be submitted to the address above. Renewal requests should note any changes from the original application and permit issued. The charge for a renewal is \$97 and the charge for amending an existing permit is \$75.

## B. Sample Submission

- 1) Each shipment of serum samples must be accompanied by a [VS Form 10-4, Specimen Submission](#). If all samples are not to receive the same tests, please list each sample identification separately in space 21 (additional data). The hyperlinked form includes detailed instructions for completing it.
- 2) Instructions for processing and submitting serum samples follow:
  - a. Blood samples: Draw blood and allow to clot. Remove serum and transfer at least 5 ml of the serum into a second tube. The serum should be the color of straw with little to no red tinge (no hemolysis). ***Serum with aggregates of clot or evidence of contamination or hemolysis will be discarded immediately.*** Serum submitted in clot tubes, serum separation tubes, or in glass tubes is unacceptable. Tubes must be leak proof, round-bottomed, made of polypropylene or polystyrene, and approximately 12 by 75 mm in size. A second serum sample must be submitted for all horses if the equine infectious anemia test has been requested.

b. Serum samples

1. Tubes containing the serum must be individually identified with the tube number, the animal's name, and a tattoo or registration number, if available. Information must be recorded either directly on the tubes or on a label applied individually to each tube.
2. Refrigerate samples before shipment and during shipment. Do not add preservatives of any kind to the sample. Send clear undiluted serum only.
3. Include a copy of the import permit with the shipping documentation on the outside of the package.
4. Send samples, preferably by air mail, to:

National Veterinary Services Laboratories  
1920 Dayton Ave.  
Ames, IA 50010

5. The importer must arrange for the pickup of the containers from the airline freight terminals and delivery to NVSL (if necessary). NVSL prefers that samples be shipped to it directly. Samples will be accepted when "hand-carried" ONLY if placed in a container that has been sealed with an official seal of the national government of the country where the samples originated. All samples must be declared to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) on arrival. Shipping containers will not be opened until delivered to the laboratory (except in cases when CPB or Agriculture port inspectors believe a port of arrival inspection is necessary). In these instances, the containers will be resealed, signed, and dated by the inspector. Containers showing evidence of being opened without signatures and date ***will not be processed by the laboratory.***
6. NVSL will furnish results by mail, fax, email, or phone call to the person indicated as the submitter on the VS Form 10-4. Do not call NVSL for laboratory results.
7. NVSL will not authorize overtime to run these tests.
8. The cost of the laboratory tests is established by user fees and must be paid at the time the samples are submitted to the laboratory. The samples must be accompanied with payment by check, money order, or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, Discover, or American Express) in U.S. currency, unless the importer or broker has established a user fee account.
9. Contact the User Fee Help Line ((515) 337-6200) to establish an account or to obtain a current price list for tests.

## 7. Inquiries

Please contact the User Fee Help Line at (515) 337-6200 for further inquiries.