

Export of Pet Food Containing Bovinae Ingredients

Changes to Part IV of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Health of Animal Regulations pertaining to the importation of animal products, including pet food, are expected to be implemented and in effect by October 1, 2008. The provisions of CFIA's enhanced feed ban, which prohibits the feeding of bovine materials identified as specified risk materials (SRMs) to all animals, were implemented July 12, 2007.

Under the new regulatory requirements, all U.S. origin pet foods and pet treats which contain bovine (i.e., cattle, bison, and buffalo) ingredients* will only be allowed entry into Canada with an import permit (issued to the Canadian importer) and an official animal health/export certificate endorsed by a full-time salaried USDA veterinarian. U.S. companies that will be impacted are encouraged to begin working with their Canadian importers now to ensure that import permit are secured prior to the effective date of implementation of the new requirements.

*Bovine ingredients, as defined for the purpose of determining the need for an import permit, excludes those materials identified by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as essentially BSE risk free, including milk or dairy ingredients and protein free tallow (maximum level of insoluble impurities of 0.15% in weight).

Requirements

1. The facility must either be dedicated (i.e., does not receive, store, or process any bovine materials considered to be specified risk materials or SRMs*) or the facility must have a totally dedicated line (from receipt of raw materials, through processing, storage and load out) to prevent any cross contamination of products intended for export to Canada with prohibited materials.
2. The products must not contain SRMs* or if the product contains ingredients with materials that could be considered SRMs, the ingredients must have originated in a Category 1 (negligible BSE risk) country. [Facility must be able to provide supporting documentation for bovine materials from a Category 1 country.]
3. If the products contain protein free tallow in addition to other bovine ingredients, the facility must provide a certificate of analysis or laboratory results for the lot or lots of tallow used in the product verifying that the maximum level of insoluble impurities is 0.15% in weight.

*SRMs are defined as the skull, including the brain, trigeminal ganglia, eyes, spinal cord, dorsal root ganglia, and the vertebral column (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, and the wings of the sacrum) from cattle (or other bovine – bison, buffalo) aged 30 months or older; and the distal ileum of the small intestine (i.e., the last 200 cm or 80 inches of the small intestine) and tonsils from cattle (or other bovine – bison, buffalo) of all ages. NOTE: These otherwise prohibited materials are acceptable in ingredients or products originating from Category 1 (negligible BSE risk) countries.

Process (Import Permit)

For U.S. facilities to continue exporting pet food to Canada containing bovine ingredients (with exceptions as noted above) following the implementation of Part IV of CFIA's Health of Animal Regulations, the following process must be accomplished.

1. A responsible and knowledgeable facility employee completes the CFIA "Facility Questionnaire – Importation from the USA of Pet Foods with Bovine Ingredients." * The questionnaire can be obtained from the Canadian importer. It can also be downloaded from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) International Animal Products Regulations (IREGs) or obtained from the VS Area Offices. [*Although the title of this form says "bovine", CFIA has stated that the requirement covers all bovine – cattle, bison, and buffalo.]
2. The facility contacts the appropriate VS Area Office to request an inspection of the facility; endorsement of the Facility Questionnaire; and completion and endorsement of the "Pet Food Facility Inspection Checklist for Canada." The inspection checklist can be obtained from the same resources as the Facility Questionnaire (i.e., from the Canadian importer; from the APHIS VS IREGs; or from the VS Area Office).
NOTE: The facility can schedule the inspection before completing the Facility Questionnaire; however, the Facility Questionnaire must be completed and available for review by VS at the time of the inspection.
3. At the time of inspection, the VS veterinarian reviews the completed Facility Questionnaire; verifies that the information is complete and accurate; signs and dates the form; and applies the Official APHIS seal. The original is returned to the facility to provide to the Canadian importer. The facility and the VS Area Office should maintain a copy of the Facility Questionnaire on file, and a copy should be forwarded (by the VS Area Office) to the National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), Animal Products Exports Staff, together with a copy of the inspection checklist (see #4 and #5 below). NOTE: The importer's name and signature do not need to be on the document prior to endorsement by VS.
4. During/following the inspection, the VS veterinarian completes the Pet Food Facility Inspection Checklist for Canada and signs, dates and seals it. The original document is returned to the facility to provide to the Canadian importer. The facility and the VS Area Office should maintain a copy of the Facility Questionnaire on file, and a copy should be forwarded by the VS Area Office to NCIE.
5. The facility provides the completed/endorsed/sealed Facility Questionnaire and Pet Food Facility Inspection Checklist for Canada to the Canadian importer who submits them to CFIA together with the application for an import permit. NOTE: The original documents should be provided to the Canadian importer. Once CFIA has original (and current) documents on file for the facility, copies of the documents can be provided to subsequent Canadian importers applying for import permits. The facility does not have to be re-inspected for subsequent importers provided the inspection of record and the questionnaire are current.

6. The VS Area Office forwards a copy of the Facility Questionnaire and Pet Food Facility Inspection Checklist for Canada to APHIS VS-NCIE, Animal Products Export Staff. If the data indicates that the facility meets CFIA requirements, NCIE will assign an approval number (if the facility does not already have one) and add the facility to the database of facilities approved to export pet food with bovine ingredients to Canada. NOTE: Facilities approved by APHIS VS for Canada are not authorized to export pet foods containing bovine ingredients to Canada until the Canadian importer has obtained a valid import permit allowing entry of the products.

Process (Health Certification)

1. The Canadian importer forwards a copy of the CFIA import permit to the U.S. exporter for use in preparation of health certificate and other shipping documents for exports to Canada.
2. The U.S. exporter provides a copy of the import permit to the appropriate VS Area Office, together with VS Form 16-4, Health Certificate-Export Certificate-Animal Products, with the required certification statements as outlined in the import permit.
3. The endorsing VS Area Office verifies that the VS Form 16-4 contains the certification statements as required by the import permit and the manufacturing/exporting facility meets CFIA's requirements (i.e., approved facility) prior to signing, dating, and sealing the health certificate. NOTE: Certification statements supported by the facility inspection are to be made as direct attestations and not on the basis of a notarized affidavit.
4. The exporter obtains an original, official health certificate (VS Form 16-4) for each shipment of pet food being exported to Canada. NOTE: CFIA requires that each shipment of pet food be accompanied by an original, official health certificate. While exporters define what constitutes a shipment, in so doing they need to ensure that all parts of the shipment arrive at the Canadian border port at the same time accompanied by the required original, official health certificate.
5. The exporter ensures that each shipment of pet food to Canada is accompanied by an original, official health certificate, and a copy of the import permit that allows entry of the product into Canada.
6. U.S. exporters can work with their Canadian importers to obtain pre-clearance of pet food shipments. For a description of this process, please see the "Shipping Procedures & Document Flow" section of the document titled "Procedures and Documentary Process – Import of Pet Foods from the USA" which was provided by CFIA. Questions about the process should be directed to Canadian importers. If the "quantity" of product will need to be estimated on the VS Form 16-4 to use this pre-clearance option, the Canadian importer should verify that this will be acceptable to CFIA.