



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Announces Final Rule Regarding the Importation of Horses from Contagious Equine Metritis-Affected Countries

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is making final its interim rule regarding the importation of horses from countries affected with contagious equine metritis (CEM).

“These certification and testing requirements, in addition to our existing import regulations, will strengthen protections for horses in the United States,” said John R. Clifford, USDA’s Chief Veterinary Officer and Deputy Administrator for APHIS’ Veterinary Services program.

APHIS has taken this action after reviewing probable causes of CEM outbreaks in the United States. This review identified the need to strengthen testing protocol for horses arriving from CEM-affected countries, and the final rule includes changes based on comments received on the interim rule.

APHIS will now have additional entry requirements for imported horses based on age. Yearlings and weanlings must not have been bred to other horses, either through artificial insemination or live breeding, from the time they were tested for CEM until export. Test mares, imported mares and imported stallions above a certain age are now required to undergo an additional CEM test that will help improve the accuracy of final test results. These actions outlined in the final rule will provide additional safeguards against the introduction of CEM through the importation of affected horses.

The final rule can be found by visiting www.aphis.usda.gov.

The final rule is published in today’s Feb. 12 edition of the *Federal Register* and is effective upon publication.

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