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# Using a Broker to Import Horses into the United States

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Generally, horse owners will enlist the services of a broker/shipping agent to bring a horse into the United States. While APHIS does not require use of a broker/shipping agent for importing horses, experienced brokers can be very helpful.

They coordinate the efforts of airlines, customs brokers, APHIS and other partner government agencies to ensure the safety of the animals, facilitate clearance of the shipment, and schedule a timely arrival. These agents are familiar with the documents and processing associated with import and export regulations.

Some key services an experienced broker/shipping agent can provide include:

- Working with the customs agent on your behalf to clear the horses through Customs and Border Protection requiring security clearance.
- Contacting the Animal Import Centers to reserve a space for quarantine at the pre-determined point of arrival, notifying the Veterinary Services (VS) port of entry veterinarian of the horses' arrival, and ensuring payment for services.
- Arranging for the horses to be transported from the airport to the quarantine center. A competent handler should accompany the horses at all times. If a stallion or mare is being imported for permanent entry, and originates from a region that APHIS considers to be affected with contagious equine metritis (CEM), the broker will arrange travel to the USDA-approved state quarantine location after the Federal quarantine is completed.

Additional services a broker/shipping agent can provide include:

- Facilitating safe disposal of waste (manure, bedding, uneaten feed), as well as cleaning and disinfection of the transport vehicle to avoid contamination of stabling and transports per APHIS guidance.
- Safeguarding the welfare of the horses while in transit, including making sure the animals receive hay, grain, and a clean water supply.
- Ensuring Federal requirements for transiting horses and restricted movement under the APHIS seal are followed
- Confirming all user fees are paid - both for private costs and APHIS costs, including testing at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories.

The broker/shipping agent is responsible for planning the travel route, submitting it to the appropriate veterinary authorities, and identifying emergency layover sites if needed. They serve as the courier for pre-import blood testing for National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). The broker/shipping agent needs to identify at least one point of contact along the travel route within the continental United States in the event of an emergency. If there are any changes to the itinerary, the importer notifies APHIS in writing a minimum of 15 days prior to the change.

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