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Importing Ratites and Hatching Eggs of Ratites into the United States

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Ratites are defined as cassowaries, emus, kiwis, ostriches, and rheas.

The USDA regulates the importation of all avian species including ratites and hatching eggs of ratites into the United States. These regulations were developed to

prevent the introduction of highly contagious diseases of poultry such as highly pathogenic avian influenza and Newcastle disease. A current list of countries considered affected can be found at [Animal Health Status of Regions](#)

Requirements

Import Requirements for Ratites (live birds, for all countries except Canada)

- Must be identified using a microchip.
- Ratite shipments must be accompanied by a USDA import permit (application to obtain a permit is form: [VS Form 17-129](#)). Processing time for the application is approximately 7 – 10 business days. Applications should be received no less than this time prior to shipment of birds. There is a processing fee which can be paid by check, money order, charge card or by providing a USDA user fee account. For an additional fee, the permit can be amended after issuance by request.
- Importers may submit an online application for an import or transit permit for APHIS-regulated live animals and their reproductive tissue (genetic resources) using the VS Form 17-129 through the APHIS [eFile system](#)
- [Download the import application](#) or contact Strategies & Policies, Live Animal Import Team: LAIpermits@usda.gov
- A health certificate, issued within 30 days of leaving the country of export, must accompany all ratite shipments. A full-time salaried veterinarian of the veterinary competent authority, located in the exporting country, must endorse the health certificate, with English translation.
- **Live Ratites:** Exporting countries can use the [model health certificate](#) (430.26 KB) provided or use their own document which carries U.S. health certificate requirements.
- A USDA port veterinarian at the first U.S. port of entry must inspect birds (unless stated differently on the import permit). The importer must arrange for this inspection by a USDA port veterinarian at least 72 hours in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at the telephone number listed on the import permit.
- At U.S. arrival, ratites are required to proceed immediately into 30 day quarantine.
- The importer should retain the services of a customs broker to facilitate the importation and, in some cases, the transport of birds from the port of entry to

the USDA Animal Import Center. The importer can contact the Import Center for a list of customs brokers to provide this service.

Import Requirements for Hatching Eggs of Ratites (for all countries except Canada)

- Must have an approved form of identification.
- Produced by a pen-raised flock.
- Accompanied by an import permit issued in advance of shipment ([VS Form 17-129](#) (73.07 KB))
- Registry certificate for premises for egg origin.
- Brooded in a hatchery that has been approved in advance by USDA and under the direct supervision of the Service Center Director in the State of destination
- Quarantined within the hatchery for the full incubation period, plus an additional 30 days after hatching.
Note: Chicks hatched during quarantine will be tested for communicable diseases of poultry.
- A health certificate, issued within 30 days of leaving the country of export, must accompany all ratite hatching egg shipments. A full-time salaried veterinarian of the veterinary competent authority, located in the exporting country, must endorse the health certificate, with English translation.
- **Hatching Eggs of Ratites:** Exporting countries can use the [model health certificate](#) (516.96 KB) provided or use their own document which carries U.S. health certificate requirements.
- Shipments must fly direct to an approved U.S. port of entry. A USDA port veterinarian at the port of entry must inspect birds (unless stated differently on the import permit). The importer must arrange for this inspection by a USDA port veterinarian at least 72 hours in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at the telephone number listed on the import permit.
- The importer should retain the services of a customs broker to facilitate the importation and, in some cases, the transport of birds from the port of entry to the USDA Animal Import Center. The importer can contact the Import Center for a list of customs brokers to provide this service.

Import Requirements for Ratites (live birds) and Hatching Eggs of Ratites from Canada

Ratites that were hatched and raised in Canada OR were legally imported upon arrival in Canada, underwent 28 days of Canadian quarantine and remained in Canada for an additional 60 days following completion of quarantine. Must fulfill the

following importation requirements:

- Not required to be quarantined
- If the poultry enters the United States through an air or sea port, an import permit is required.
 - The application for an import permit is [VS Form 17-129](#) (73.07 KB).
 - However, an import permit is not required for ratites imported from Canada through a U.S. - Canadian land border port.
- Ratites must have a veterinary health certificate, endorsed by the Canadian government (CFAI) and issued within 30 days of import.
- **Live Ratites:** A [sample health certificate template with U.S. import requirements from Canada](#) (484.01 KB) can be used in this importation.
- **Hatching Eggs of Ratites:** A [sample health certificate template with U.S. import requirements from Canada](#) (79.28 KB) can be used in this importation.
- The Canadian land border ports that may be able to accept imports of ratites are:
 - Idaho: Eastport
 - Maine: Houlton
 - Michigan: Detroit, Port Huron
 - Montana: Raymond, Sweetgrass
 - New York: Alexandria Bay, Niagara Falls
 - North Dakota: Dunseith, Pembina, Portal
 - Vermont: Highgate Springs
 - Washington: Oroville, Sumas

Note: it is the responsibility of the importer to confirm availability at the listed ports.

Import Requirements for Ratites (live birds) from Canada for Immediate Slaughter

- Ratites from Canada can be imported without quarantine.
- An import permit is not required when entering the US via a land border port.
- Confirmation of availability at the port of entry should be discussed with APHIS VS port veterinarian 3 business days prior to arrival at the port of entry.
- Identification and Documentation:
 - Identification is not needed for ratites from Canada.
 - Two copies of a declaration is required. The declaration must list: port of entry, name and address of importer, name and address of the broker, origin of the ratites, number and type of birds, purpose of the import, and

location of slaughter establishment.

- Accompanied by a [veterinary health certificate with specific certification statements](#) (452.97 KB), issued by a Canadian practicing veterinarian and endorsed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) within 30 days of importation.
- Inspection at the port of entry:
 - If all of the requirements for entry have been met, the port veterinarian will seal the shipment with APHIS seals and issue a completed VS Form 17-30, 'Report of Animals, Poultry or Eggs Offered for Importation'. The port veterinarian will also seal conveyances and issue a completed VS Form 17-33 (two copies) 'Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter'. The U.S. seal numbers will be written on the VS Form 17-33.
 - The ratites for immediate slaughter must be imported to a slaughtering establishment approved by APHIS VS to receive these kinds of animals. The establishment should be approved by FSIS to receive animals that are imported direct to slaughter along an APHIS- approved route of transportation. The port vet should relay information about the shipment to the USDA representative at the receiving slaughter establishment and request follow up to the VS Form 17-33.
- The lead vehicle in a convoy of the same animals must have an original signed document for the animals in the entire convoy. Each vehicle following the lead vehicle in the convoy with ratites for immediate slaughter must have separate signed copies of the documentation for animals on those vehicles.
- If any emergencies occur during transportation that would entail a delay in delivery or diversion from the specified route, the driver must notify APHIS VS port personnel using the phone number listed on the import permit (VS-1733) for further instructions.

Information on Quarantine Requirements

Note: An import permit will not be issued until quarantine arrangements have been finalized.

- Ratite (live bird) quarantines must take place at one of the USDA facilities listed below or private quarantine may occur in an APHIS approved facility.
- Hatching eggs of ratites may only be quarantined in an APHIS approved private facility.

Miami Animal Import Center

USDA-APHIS-VS

6300 NW 36 Street

Miami, FL 33122

(305) 876-2200 (phone)

(305) 876-2201 (fax)

NotifyMAIC@usda.gov

New York Animal Import Center

USDA, APHIS, VS

474 International Boulevard

Rock Tavern, NY 12575

(845) 838-5500 (phone)

(845) 838-5575 (fax)

VSPSNIC@usda.gov

- Importers must obtain the approval for a private facility to be used as quarantine prior to applying for an import permit. Information and guidance on obtaining that approval can be obtained from the Strategy & Policy, Live Animal Import Team
- During the quarantine period, all avians are tested in quarantine to determine if they are free of certain communicable diseases. The cost of diagnostic testing is separate from the quarantine fee.
- The USDA Animal Import Center will provide the total fee for services for the inspection and quarantine. Estimates of quarantine costs can be found at [VS Import/Export User Fees](#)

[View VS Guidance and Other Documents for Avian Importation](#)

Questions?

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import Permit team if you have questions before you apply for a permit.

For questions about import permits or permit applications:

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Email: laipermits@usda.gov

Phone: [301-851-3300](tel:301-851-3300)

APHIS Port Services

For questions about import inspections at a port of entry, quarantine of animals arriving from a foreign country, or requesting approval as a private animal import quarantine facility, contact APHIS Port Services.

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Live Animal Import and Export

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import and Export team for questions about current trade restrictions, or other questions not related to permits.

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: [301-851-3300](tel:301-851-3300)

[All Contacts](#)