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Import Requirements for Sheep and Goats From Canada into the United States

Last Modified:



APHIS regulates the importation of all ruminants and their germplasm (embryos/oocytes, semen, cloning tissue) to prevent the spread of animal diseases. **Ruminants** include all animals that chew the cud, such as cattle, buffaloes, sheep,

goats, deer, antelopes, camels, llamas, and giraffes.

Live Sheep and Goats

- Protocol U.S.-origin sheep and goat movements (58.18 KB) through Canada from one U.S. location to a second U.S. location
- Protocol Transit of Swine, Sheep and Goats From Canada to Mexico by Land Through the United States (184.31 KB)

Import Requirements

Expand All

Live Sheep and Goats for Breeding or Production From Canada

1. **Eligibility for Import**
   - Live sheep and goats for breeding or production may only be imported to the United States from Canada under the following conditions:
     - **Either:** The Canadian herd of origin must be of Certified Plus Status in the Canadian Scrapie Flock Certification Program;
     - **Or:** If importing based on genotype, the imported animal must be a male **sheep** (ram) of genotype 136AA/171 RR or 136AA/171QR;
     - **Or:** The import has been approved by APHIS on a case-by-case basis (female **sheep** of genotype 136AA/171RR or male **sheep** of genotype 136AA/171KR or 136AA/171HR). Please contact APHIS for more information.
2. **Import Permit**
   - An import permit is required. The application, **VS Form 17-129, "Application for Import or in Transit Permit"** may be obtained by emailing laipermits@usda.gov, by downloading it from the APHIS website, or file electronically using the eFile system. Please allow 7–10 business days for permit processing.

- When applying for an import permit, the following information must be provided:
- The flock identification number of the destination flock/premises
- The premises identification number of the destination flock/premises as listed in the Scrapie National Database.
  - Flock owners should call 866-USDA-TAG to obtain a premise/flock ID, if they do not already have one.
- If applicable, documentation demonstrating that the animal(s) for import have reached and maintained Certified Plus status in the Canadian Scrapie Flock Certification Program. The documentation must specify the address, or other means of identification, of the premises and flock of origin.
- If applying for import of a male sheep (ram) based on genotype, provide laboratory reports showing the animal is determined to be codon 136AA 171RR or 136AA 171QR genotype. Genotype assessment must be performed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) or another laboratory approved by the USDA. Sampling must be performed by an accredited veterinarian, and the official ID for each animal must be listed on the laboratory report.

  ** **ALERT:** As of December 3, 2025, Gene Check, Inc. (Greeley, CO) is no longer approved by APHIS to perform official scrapie resistant genotype testing. Any testing performed after this date will not be accepted for the purposes of ovine genotype testing for import to the United States. Any testing performed at this lab prior to December 3, 2025, will be considered valid for the purposes of import.

  ** The list of laboratories approved by APHIS to perform scrapie susceptibility genotype testing should be checked prior to submitting any samples, as approvals may change over time: APHIS-Approved Laboratories.
- If requesting import of an animal(s) not meeting the two categories above, you must first contact APHIS to perform a case-by-case evaluation before applying for an import permit.

*Separate import permit applications must be submitted for male and female sheep being imported based on genotype.

3. **Veterinary Export Health Certificate**
    - A veterinary health certificate, issued by an authorized veterinarian in Canada within 30 days of import and endorsed by a CFIA official veterinarian is required.
    - Health Certificate for the Export of Sheep or Goats for Breeding or Production from Canada to the United States (2.11 MB)
4. **Ports of Entry**
    - If imported by land, the sheep and goats must be presented for entry at a land border port listed in 9 CFR 93.403(b). The port veterinarian must be contacted at least 10 business days prior to planned arrival. The port veterinarian will request information to determine whether an on-vehicle inspection of the animals is feasible, or if a destination inspection will need to be arranged.
    - If imported by air, the sheep and goats must enter via one of the approved airports for ruminants outlined in 9 CFR 93.403. The port veterinarian will assess fitness to travel and review accompanying documentation, with the entry inspection performed by USDA at the destination facility (with the animals traveling under seal to their destination). The port must be contacted at least 3 business days in advance of the proposed arrival date to confirm coverage and availability.
5. **Identification of Sheep and Goats**
    - All imported sheep and goats must be officially identified with official Canadian ear tag that will allow the animals to be traced to the farm or premises of birth.
    - All imported sheep and goats must have a country mark applied: either a “C” brand (not less than 1 inch high and can be applied to any haired area on the animal that can be readily observed. Improperly applied brands or hair brands or anything that does not result in a permanent mark is not acceptable) or a “CΛN” tattoo applied to the inside of the left ear, or for animals with insufficient ear space to the tail web region.
6. **Certification and Testing Requirements**
    - Health certification requirements are noted on the CFIA export health certificate and will be outlined in the import permit. Required attestations include:

- Canada is free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), rinderpest, surra and contagious pleuropneumonia.
- The animals were born in the United States or Canada or were legally imported into Canada and have been under no movement restrictions within Canada or the United States for at least 60 days prior to importation into the United States.
- The sheep or goats were born after March 1, 1999, which is the date determined by APHIS to be the effective enforcement of a ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban.
- Within the 60 days prior to export, the sheep or goats have not been commingled with sheep or goats of a lower health status or resided on the premises of a flock or herd of lower health status, including after leaving the flock of residence and prior to arrival in the United States.
- If a female is implanted with an embryo it is indicated in the description section on the identification of animals attachment and the embryo has been certified by the CFIA as meeting United States import conditions for embryos.
- The health certificate shall indicate if any female sheep or goats listed on the health certificate are of breeding age (other than female lambs or kids accompanied by their mothers) and have been exposed and potentially mated to a breeding age male prior to export. Female sheep genotyped 136AA/171RR have only been exposed to rams originating from a tuberculosis and brucellosis free province or territory or a tuberculosis and brucellosis free herd and have never resided in a flock that has had a confirmed case of classical scrapie during their residency.
- The sheep and goats were inspected for export within 30 days of export and found free from infectious and contagious disease.
- The sheep or goats have not been exposed to contagious or infectious disease and have not commingled with sheep or goats of a lower health status or resided on the premises of a flock or herd of lower health status during the 60 days prior to export, and the exporter has been directed to maintain this status during transport to the United States.

        - Containers and conveyances used during the export process have been cleaned and disinfected using a product approved by CFIA.
    - Testing:
        - Tuberculosis: within 30 days prior to export, **goats** must have a negative caudal fold tuberculin test using *M. bovis* PPD tuberculin; the test must be administered by an official veterinarian designated by CFIA.
        - *Brucella abortus*: **goats** must have a negative test within 30 days prior to export; acceptable testing methodologies include FPA, or rose-bengal test/card test, or Complement Fixation, or I-ELISA or Buffered Plate Antigen Agglutination test.
        - **Sheep** have continually resided since birth in a brucellosis and tuberculosis free province or territory or in a brucellosis and tuberculosis free herd.
        - Animals imported based on genotype must have the pre-export genotype testing performed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) or another laboratory approved by the USDA; the results must be indicated on the accompanying export health certificate. Sampling must be performed by an accredited veterinarian, and the official ID for each animal must be listed on the laboratory report. The animal's genotype must be verified within 30 days after entry into the United States. Post-entry genotype testing for female sheep must be performed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). Post-entry genotype testing for male sheep may be performed by the NVSL or another laboratory that is USDA-approved to perform the testing. Samples must be collected and submitted as required for official genotype tests in the United States.

          ** If submitting samples for genotype testing to a U.S. USDA-approved laboratory other than NVSL, you should confirm the approved status of the laboratory prior to submitting the samples: APHIS-Approved Laboratories. The laboratory re-approval process is currently in progress, and laboratories will be removed from the approved list if they do not successfully complete that process.

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7. **Post-Entry and Additional Requirements**
    - Post-entry requirements pertaining to animal traceback and recordkeeping apply and will need to be met by the importer of record. These requirements will be outlined in the import permit and can also be found in detail at Post-Entry Requirements for Importers of Live Sheep and Goats From Canada for Breeding or Production.
    - Additional Requirements:
        - Importers are advised that individual states may have additional import requirements. It is the importer's responsibility to verify these conditions and to meet them. The importer should contact the U.S. State veterinarian (State Regulations and Import Requirements) of the destination State to determine these regulations.
8. **Sheep or Goats Refused Entry**
    - If the sheep or goats are unaccompanied by the required certificate, or if they are found upon inspection at the port of entry to be affected with a communicable disease or to have been exposed thereto, they shall be refused entry and shall be handled or quarantined, or otherwise disposed of as the Administrator may direct.
    - Further, if it is determined prior to or after importation that any pre-entry or post-entry requirements were not met, or the sheep or goats are affected with or have been exposed to TSEs, the ruminants, their progeny, and any other ruminants that have been housed with or exposed to the ruminants will be disposed of or otherwise handled as directed by the Administrator.

Immediate Slaughter Sheep and Goats From Canada

1. **Eligibility and Import Permit**

- Health Certificate for the Export of Sheep and Goats for Slaughter from Canada to the United States (1.83 MB)
- Sheep and goats for immediate slaughter may be imported into the United States with no permit required, as long as the following requirements are met:
  - The animals must be accompanied by an official Canadian health certificate.
  - The sheep and goats must be presented for entry at a land border port listed in 9 CFR 93.403(b).
  - The animals must be transported by land under seal directly from the port of entry to an APHIS-approved slaughtering establishment where they will be slaughtered. The conveyances must be sealed with seals of the U.S. Government at the port of entry. The seals may be broken only at the recognized slaughtering establishment by an authorized USDA representative.
  - In all other cases, an import permit will be required. The application, **VS Form 17-129, "Application for Import or in Transit Permit,"** may be obtained by emailing laipermits@usda.gov, by downloading it from the APHIS website, or file electronically using the eFile system.
- For slaughtering establishments to be able to receive Canadian sheep and goats directly from the port of entry for immediate slaughter, the slaughtering establishment must have prior approval by VS in accordance with the USDA APHIS VS Guidance Document "Importation of Restricted Animals from Canada and Mexico for Immediate Slaughter." Immediate Slaughter Facility Approved List.
- The sheep or goats must be slaughtered within 2 weeks (14 days) of entry into the United States.

2. **Identification Requirements**
   - Each animal must be individually identified by an official Canadian ear tag that will enable traceback to the flock of origin.
     - All tags must be clean and readable and preferably in the right ear to expedite inspection at the port of entry.
     - Complete ear tag numbers must be recorded on the health certificate.
3. **Health Certification Requirements**

- An original and two copies of the official Canadian health certificate are required for each vehicle.
- The official health certificate must be issued by a veterinarian designated or accredited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and must be endorsed by a full- time salaried veterinarian employed by CFIA. The health certificate is valid for 30 days from the issue date.
- Required health certifications are outlined on the official Canadian health certificate and include the following:
  - Canada is free from foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, surra, and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia.
  - The sheep or goats have been kept in Canada during the last 60 days immediately preceding the date of shipment to the United States.
  - The sheep and goats are subject to a ruminant feed ban equivalent to the requirements established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
  - The movement of the sheep or goats is not restricted within Canada because of exposure to a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy.
  - The sheep or goats are not in quarantine in Canada or under any movement restriction.
  - The sheep or goats are not in late gestation and are fit for travel.
  - The sheep, or goats have been inspected and found to be free from any evidence of communicable disease and that, as far as can be determined, they have not been exposed to any such disease during the preceding 60 days.

4. **Scrapie Certification Requirements**
   - The region where the sheep or goats originated has not been recognized as free of classical scrapie by APHIS, but the following criteria have been met:
     - TSEs in sheep and goats are compulsorily notifiable to the national veterinary authority of Canada;
     - An effective classical scrapie awareness, surveillance, monitoring and control system is in place;
     - TSE-affected sheep and goats are killed and completely destroyed;
     - The sheep and goats selected for export showed no clinical signs of scrapie on the day of shipment and are fit for travel;

        - The sheep and goats have not tested positive for, and are not suspect for, a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy; and
        - The animals' movement is not restricted within Canada due to animal health reasons.
5. **Testing Requirements**
    - No tests are required for sheep and goats imported for immediate slaughter.
6. **Port of Entry**
    - Sheep or goats must enter through an approved port of entry listed in 9 CFR 93.403(b) and be inspected at the port of entry.
    - The VS port VMO will issue a VS Form 17-30 "Report of Animals, Poultry, or Eggs Offered for Importation" and VS Form 17- 33 "Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter".
    - In the event that the shipment does not comply with protocol requirements, the port veterinarian will document the number of sheep or goats in the shipments that are rejected. The port veterinarian will also contact the appropriate officials with CBP and CFIA port authorities to inform them of the refusal of the shipment.

Sheep and Goats for Restricted Feeding for Slaughter From Canada

Requirements for Canadian Sheep and Goats Imported for Restricted Feeding for Slaughter

- Live sheep and goats intended for **restricted feeding for slaughter** are eligible for import into the United States if all requirements outlined below are met.
- Approved Designated Feedlot requirements:
    - For approval, the feedlot owner should contact State Animal Health Officials for the initial review, and the APHIS VS District Office to schedule an inspection and obtain additional information.
    - A written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be signed by the feedlot operator and USDA APHIS.
    - Canadian sheep and goats imported for restricted feeding for slaughter may only be moved from the designated feedlot to a specified APHIS

Approved Immediate Slaughter Facility.

- Import Permit
    1. An import permit is required. The application, **VS Form 17-129, "Application for Import or in Transit Permit"** may be completed and filed electronically using the eFile system. Or the VS 17-129 (73.07 KB) form may be completed and emailed to laipermits@usda.gov for processing. **Please allow at least 7 business days for permit processing**.
    2. When applying for an import permit, the following information must be provided:
        - Approved designated feedlot (name, address) where animals will reside until they are moved to slaughter.
        - Premises or location ID number of the designated feedlot assigned in the APHIS National Scrapie Database and when applicable, the flock identification number.
        - A **written contingency plan** to deal with potential emergencies en route is required before the permit is issued, to include emergency contact number(s) for the importer or their representative, veterinary contacts along the route who may provide assistance for health and safety issues involving the animals, and documented source(s) of water.
- A **Veterinary Export Health Certificate** issued by an authorized veterinarian in Canada within 30 days of import and endorsed by a CFIA official veterinarian is required. Required certification attestations will be outlined in the import permit and the Canadian health certificate.
    - Health Certificate for the Export of Sheep and Goats for Restricted Feeding for Slaughter from Canada to the United States (1.57 MB)
- Ports of Entry
    - The sheep and goats must move through a port of entry allowed for ruminants in a transport conveyance sealed at the export premise with official seals of Canada.
    - The sheep and goats must be moved directly as a group from the port of entry to the designated feedlot as listed on the permit. On arrival, the official seals on the transport will be removed by APHIS personnel or an authorized APHIS representative, and the animals unloaded for inspection.
- Identification of Imported Sheep and Goats

1. All animals must be identified with official Canadian ID (ear tag) allowing the animals to be traced at any time to the flock of residence. Complete primary and any secondary ear tag numbers must be recorded on the health certificate.
2. All imported sheep and goats must be identified with a permanent country mark unless otherwise stipulated in the formal MOU between the designated feedlot and APHIS.
    - The imported animals must have either a legible “CʌN” tattoo located inside the left ear (or the tail web for animals with insufficient ear space), or a “C” brand.
    - The “C” brand must be not less than 1 inch high and can be applied to any haired area on the animal that can be readily observed. Improperly applied brands or hair brands or anything that does not result in a permanent mark is not acceptable.
    - This area must be shaved prior to export so the ID may be clearly visible.

- Post-Entry and Additional Requirements
    - Post-Entry requirements pertaining to the approved designated feedlot and restricted movement of the imported animals will apply as outlined in 9 CFR 93.435(c)(11) and will be stipulated in the MOU.
    - Individual states (contact State Animal Health Officials) may have additional import requirements. It is the importer's responsibility to verify these conditions and to meet them.
- Sheep or goats refused entry
    - If the sheep or goats are not presented with the required certificate, or if they are rejected at the port of entry after evaluation by APHIS officials, they will be refused entry.
    - After importation, if any pre-entry or post-entry requirements are not met, or the sheep or goats are found to be affected with or exposed to TSEs (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies such as scrapie), these animals, their progeny, and any others exposed to these sheep or goats will be disposed of or otherwise handled as directed by the Administrator.

Sheep and Goat Semen

- An import permit and export health certificate are required for the import of ovine/caprine semen.
    - Health Certificate for the Export of Ovine Semen from Canada to the United States (290.38 KB)
    - Health Certificate for the Export of Caprine Semen from Canada to the United States (224.8 KB)

1. Importers or their designated agents must provide documentation of the destination facility premises ID if importing to a semen storage facility, or both the flock ID and the premises ID if imported directly to a farm/producer as assigned and recorded in the Surveillance Collaborative System/Scrapie (SCS SCR) with the permit application.
2. A verification certificate required to import sheep or goat semen from Canada (200.86 KB). This must be submitted with the import permit application.
3. There are also post-import requirements (147.13 KB) for each facility using this commodity.

Sheep and Goat Embryos

Sheep and goat embryos cannot currently be imported from Canada.

What You Need To Know

- U.S. transits are classified as shipments presented to a U.S. port of entry for conveyance purposes to then be transported to a destination country shortly after.
    - Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits
- Please note that any animals and their germplasm transiting the United States must not transit countries with questionable disease statuses prior to reaching a U.S. port of entry.
- All transits require a contingency plan. Submit your contingency plan with your permit application (VS 17-129 (211.74 KB)) to laipermits@usda.gov. To submit an import permit electronically, visit APHIS eFile.
- If you are applying to import live animals, semen, and embryos, you may submit applications by email to laipermits@usda.gov.

Contact Us

Live Animal Imports

For questions about import permits or permit applications:

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Email: laipermits@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

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

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

All Contacts
Print