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APHIS Finalizes Amendments to Import Regulations for Horses

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The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is finalizing amendments to its import regulations for horses. These amendments will better align our regulations with international standards and allow more flexibility for permitted imports, while continuing to mitigate the risk of bringing equine diseases into the United States. The regulations also provide APHIS with more regulatory authority to enforce standards for transporting horses.

The changes include:

- increasing the amount of time allowed for horses to be in a contagious equine metritis (CEM)-affected region without testing upon their return to the United States from 60 to 90 days;
- requiring an import permit for horses transiting through CEM-affected regions and horses imported from regions affected with African Horse Sickness;
- updating ports designated for the importation of horses section;
- adding requirements for health certifications;
- requiring that horses transiting Central America or the West Indies comply with the same regulations that apply to horses directly imported from these regions,

- given the greater risk of equine diseases of concern from these areas;
- adding requirements for shipping containers, including disinfection requirements and measures to ensure horses are transported safely;
 - and miscellaneous clarifications and corrections.

This final rule is on display in today's Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/2023-19864/imports-horses>. It will be effective on October 16, 2023.

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