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USDA Announces Final Rule to Amend Veterinary Services' User Fee Regulations

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WASHINGTON, July 31, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing a final rule to amend its user fee regulations for veterinary diagnostic services and certain import- and export-related services. The rule revision introduces a notice-based process for setting fee rates that shortens the time required to update user fees and increases transparency around how fees are set.

APHIS will now publish a notice annually in the Federal Register listing the proposed fees and inviting public comment. APHIS will review and address any comments received on the notice and publish a subsequent notice with the final rates on APHIS' [user fees web page](#).

Currently, APHIS establishes user fee rates every 5 years through rulemaking, which is a lengthy process that relies on forecasting costs and customer needs into the future with limited flexibility to react to changes.

By replacing the lists of fees in the Code of Federal Regulations with standardized formulas to calculate fees, APHIS is aligning its rate-setting regulatory approach with the Agriculture Marketing Service and Food Safety and Inspection Service. Both agencies amended their regulations to provide a set of standardized fee calculation formulas instead of continuing to maintain fee rates within their regulations.

APHIS solicited comments concerning our proposal for 60 days ending December 2, 2022.

APHIS' animal health import and export user fees cover significant activities across the country, including at border locations and quarantine facilities. These fees support personnel, brick and mortar facilities, and information technology systems and recover the costs of inspection and certification services for imports and exports of live animals and animal products and byproducts and for providing veterinary diagnostic goods and services. APHIS does not receive appropriated funding to support these activities.

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