



# Factsheet

## Approved Establishment Program: Ensuring Imported Animal Trophies Do Not Introduce Foreign Animal Diseases

As part of its mission to protect American agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) works to keep foreign animal diseases out of the United States. This work is wide-ranging, and includes a few things people may not think of as threats. Animal trophies – whether for display at a museum or personal use – can potentially carry pests and diseases found in their country of origin. However, proper processing will destroy any disease agents.

### The Role of Approved Establishments

To ensure the safe importation of trophies, APHIS developed the Approved Establishment program. The Approved Establishment program ensures these materials are appropriately handled and treated to prevent the introduction of foreign animal diseases.

Unless accompanied by an APHIS import permit or a foreign government certificate that shows specific processing is complete, animal trophies and other animal hides or feathers from certain regions of the world must be sent directly to an Approved Establishment for processing or sent to an Approved Warehouse for short term storage before processing at an Approved Establishment.

Approved Establishments are private taxidermy facilities that carry out the specific types of processing needed to kill any potential foreign animal disease agents. USDA annually inspects and approves all Approved Establishments. There are also Approved Warehouses that can store these types of trophies and materials prior to processing. When leaving the Approved Warehouse, the trophies must go directly to an Approved Establishment for processing.

Approved Establishments use processing techniques, which are specific to the animal materials and the diseases of concern, to inactivate or remove any potential disease

### WHAT NEEDS TO GO TO AN APPROVED ESTABLISHMENT?

Unfinished animal trophies, hides and feathers that come from areas of the world with the following foreign animal diseases must undergo special processing to protect against introducing those diseases into the U.S.:

- highly pathogenic avian influenza (for bird/poultry items)
- virulent Newcastle disease (for bird/poultry items)
- foot-and-mouth disease (for split-hooved animal items)
- African swine fever (for swine items)

The following items may enter without a permit or foreign certificate and do not need to go to an approved establishment:

- finished/mounted trophies
- cleaned and dried bones, antlers, horns and hooves being used as trophies
- flint dried or hard dried hides from countries without African swine fever
- trophy/display materials from rabbits, rodents, fish, shellfish and non-human primates

These items may still fall under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention import restrictions.

causing agents. After the processing is complete, they will release the materials back to the hunter or importer.

### **How the Approved Establishment Program Works**

The Approved Establishment program requires cooperation between importers (hunters and brokers), the Approved Establishments, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and USDA. To import an animal trophy or materials through this program, follow these steps:

1. Before heading overseas, know what country the animal/material will be originating from and check to see if it will require processing at an Approved Establishment. You can find information about the animal health status of the country of origin and how that affects your import on our website [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/approved\\_establishments](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/approved_establishments).
2. If you have questions, contact the APHIS animal import team at [APIE@usda.gov](mailto:APIE@usda.gov).
3. If it requires processing at an Approved Establishment, find one that handles the species you are seeking to import. USDA maintains a database of Approved Establishments and Warehouses, which is sortable by state and item type: <https://vsapps.aphis.usda.gov/vsps/public/AESearch.do?method=unspecified>.
4. While you are overseas, package your trophy securely and ship it back to the U.S., along with any required documents/paperwork.
5. The shipment must be sent directly to your chosen Approved Establishment or Approved Warehouse.
6. Before the trophy arrives, notify CBP at the port of entry for your trophy/materials. A list of contacts is available at: <https://www.cbp.gov/contact/ports>.
7. CBP officers will inspect the shipment, check the paperwork and authorize the movement of the material to an Approved Establishment or Warehouse of your choosing.
8. The Approved Establishment receives the shipment directly from the port, or from an Approved Warehouse, and completes the required processing.
9. The trophy/materials are released back to the hunter or importer.

USDA does not charge hunters or importers for using the Approved Establishment program. However, as privately owned businesses, the Approved Establishments and Approved Warehouses will charge you for their services. There may also be costs involved if you choose to use a broker or logistics provider to ease the process.

Keep in mind, there may also be separate import restrictions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and/or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please check with those Agencies before importing any trophies or materials.

FWS – [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) or 800-358-2104

CDC – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or 404-718-2077

### **For More Information**

Use our online self-guided tool to understand USDA Veterinary Services import requirements for animal products: [VS Permitting Assistant](#)

For questions about the Approved Establishment Program, contact:

USDA APHIS Animal Product Import Staff

301-851-3300

[APIE@usda.gov](mailto:APIE@usda.gov)

To learn more about becoming an Approved Establishment, contact your local [Veterinary Services service center](#) to begin the process.

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/approved\\_establishments](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/approved_establishments)