



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

## Using the Automated Commercial Environment To Submit APHIS-Required Import Data

### What is the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)?

ACE allows businesses to electronically submit import data required by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and its partner Government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). ACE automates and streamlines import entry processes, eliminating the need to submit most paper documents. It also allows importers to comply with U.S. import laws and regulations more easily and efficiently.

### How does it work?

ACE allows CBP and APHIS to collect more complete and accurate data, helping to streamline entry processing and speed the clearance and release of products. If the data does not pass validations or if certain data is missing, filers receive an error response from ACE, giving them advance warning to correct errors before they delay the release of a shipment.

### What are the benefits of using ACE?

- ACE streamlines port of entry processing and helps speed the clearance and release of imported products.
- ACE notifies filers immediately if the data they submit does not pass validations or if certain data is missing.
- ACE gives importers the opportunity to troubleshoot and improve their own processes.

### Who can use ACE to submit APHIS-required import data?

Anyone who imports APHIS-regulated commodities—such as certain animal and plant products, germplasm, and soil, among others—can submit import information electronically via ACE.

### How do I get started using ACE?

You can find instructions for getting started in ACE on the APHIS website at [www.aphis.usda.gov/ace](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ace) and on CBP's website at [www.cbp.gov/trade/ace/catair](http://www.cbp.gov/trade/ace/catair). Additionally, APHIS, working with CBP and industry groups, will offer webinars and other support to importers, brokers, and software vendors. We will also share information through the APHIS Stakeholder Registry. Sign up today at: [public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new](http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new).

### Will CBP still accept paper forms?

CBP will continue to accept paper forms and entry documents. However, by using ACE, you can help speed the processing of your shipment. Please note that government-to-government certificates—such as phytosanitary and veterinary certificates—must be presented in their original paper format even when you use ACE.

### Will APHIS require brokers and importers to use ACE when submitting import data?

When an importer or broker selects a tariff code in ACE, the system notifies the user when APHIS data is or may be required. At this time, importers and brokers can bypass these flags and proceed without entering APHIS-required data in the system. Eventually, users won't be able to proceed until they enter APHIS-required import data via the message set. When ready, APHIS will announce the timeline for making this change.

### Where can I learn more about the APHIS Core Message Set and APHIS' import data requirements?

You can read more about APHIS' data requirements in the "CBP and Trade Automated Interface Requirements APHIS (CORE) ACE PGA Message Set Implementation Guide." To view the guide, please go to APHIS' ACE website: [www.aphis.usda.gov/ace](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ace).