

# How to Meet the Requirements for Export of Aquatic Animals from the United States to Canada

*Guidance for U.S. Producers, and their USDA Accredited Veterinarians*

## **PART I- The Process of Obtaining an International Health Certificate for Aquatic Animals to Canada**

### **1. ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH A USDA ACCREDITED VETERINARIAN**

Export of aquatic animals to Canada is a transaction in international trade. Each country in the world is responsible to set conditions for the import of aquatic animals in order to protect their animal health status and aquatic animal resources. Animals exported from the U.S. must meet Canada's established requirements. USDA APHIS attests animals for export to Canada meet these requirements by endorsing (signing) an Official International Health Certificate listing these export requirements, which will be presented for inspection when the shipment arrives at the Canadian border or port of entry. A USDA Accredited Veterinarian familiar with your premises is required to issue (complete and sign) International Health Certificates for shipments, prior to submitting this completed form to USDA-APHIS for endorsement. If you are a producer, ask your premises veterinarian if they are USDA Accredited for Category 2. If they are not, they will be able to refer you to a veterinarian who is. You may also use the [Lookup Tool for Finding an Accredited Veterinarian](#), keeping in mind, Category 2 Accreditation is required to issue health certificates for aquatic animals.

### **2. SELECT THE CORRESPONDING BILATERALLY AGREED EXPORT CERTIFICATE FOR THE APPROPRIATE END USE**

U.S. exporters should work with the Canadian importer to identify which USDA APHIS export certificate is needed to accompany the aquatic animals to Canada, based on the end use identified on the import permit. The corresponding international animal health certificate template will include a series of aquatic animal health statements and disease testing requirements that have been negotiated with Canada, and that must be attested to by the USDA Accredited Veterinarian, and endorsed by USDA APHIS. In the following example, the intended use as listed on the import permit is "RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES".

**FOR THE IMPORTATION OF:/POUR L'IMPORTATION DE:**

**(Description of things(s)/Description de la ou des choses)**

1. *Litopenaeus vannamei* - TSN 551682 - Whiteleg shrimp (non-ready-to-eat, live or head on and shell on)

Description: LIVE CULTURED LITOPENAEUS VANNAMEI FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

Model International Health Certificates for export of aquatic animals to Canada are posted on the [APHIS website, Canada exports page](#). (Scroll down to the "Aquaculture/ Aquatic Animals" section.

**3. THE USDA ACCREDITED VETERINARIAN MUST DETERMINE IF THE PREMISES/ SHIPMENT OF ANIMALS MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE APPLICABLE HEALTH CERTIFICATE.**

If the USDA accredited veterinarian determines that the prospective shipment of animals meets the requirements listed on the applicable model health certificate, they may issue (fill out and sign) the health certificate in a timeline that logistically works with your shipping date. *In every case*, this includes review of disease/health/testing records of the premises of export.

**4. THE CERTIFICATE MUST BE ENDORSED BY USDA APHIS**

After the USDA Accredited Veterinarian completes and signs the International Health Certificate, the certificate must be endorsed by APHIS. To obtain APHIS endorsement, the certificate, along with any needed supporting documentation (testing records, etc) must be taken or mailed to a [USDA APHIS Service Center](#). Your closest Service Center can be found through this [Lookup Tool](#).

## Part II- Questions and Answers:

**1. QUESTION: I am a U.S. producer or USDA Accredited Veterinarian, and I have a question about one of the following, who should I contact?:**

- a. How a premises or prospective shipment can fulfill the requirements for export listed on the health certificate
- b. How I should coordinate the timeline of endorsement according to my intended shipping date
- c. How a recent disease detection or mortality issue affects the prospective shipment
- d. How to fill out a certificate for aquatic animals to Canada
- e. How restrictions for exports due to country/regional disease detections affect my ability to export/endorse a certificate for aquatic animals to Canada
- f. How to fulfill testing requirements for a very small or valuable population of animals
- g. What test methods/ tissue samples/ sample sizes are acceptable to fulfill the requirements for export
- h. Any other question on the export of aquatic animals to Canada

**ANSWER:** Please contact your local USDA APHIS Service Center, using the contact information found in the [Lookup Tool](#).

**2. QUESTION: I am the Canadian importer, and want to learn if a U.S. premises meets the requirements for export to Canada- who should I contact?**

**ANSWER:** USDA APHIS can only provide regulatory advice to U.S. stakeholders. If you are the importer in Canada, please contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. If the potential U.S. exporter/ Accredited Veterinarian has questions, have them contact APHIS using the contact in the [Lookup Tool](#).

3. **QUESTION:** the International Health Certificate says the animals need to be tested for “diseases of concern to Canada to which the species to be exported is susceptible”- where do I find those diseases for the species I want to export?

**ANSWER:** Consult the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Website [HERE](#).

4. **QUESTION:** Where should samples be sent for testing for diseases of concern for Canada for export purposes?

**ANSWER:** Testing must be conducted in approved U.S. laboratories for aquatic animal disease testing for exports. These laboratories are found [HERE](#).

5. **QUESTION:** The prospective U.S. premises for export of the aquatic animals has never reported a case of disease XYZ, does this mean the premises is “free” of disease XYZ?

**ANSWER:** It depends. Please refer to CFIA’s definition of Premises Freedom below.

6. **QUESTION:** Ok, got it! Now how do I fill out the health certificate?

**ANSWER:** For certification purposes, model certificates to Canada that offer the option to ship under “premises freedom” status for diseases of concern, will have two (2) sets of statements. The first set of statements will apply to diseases for which the premises has been declared “free”, and the second set of statements will apply to diseases for which the premises is not declared “free”. Here is an example:

**[Example: Fish for Research and Education \(click link to view corresponding posted health certificate for reference\):](#)**

Premises can be certified by the APHIS accredited veterinarian as free from diseases of concern for the species if the APHIS accredited veterinarian has verified that the premises meets all the statements in this subsection (statements 1-5 (first set of statements)) for a given disease of concern. If any of the statements in the first section 1-5 do not apply to the exporting premise for a given disease of concern for the species, 1-11 (second set of statements) will need to be met for that disease of concern. It is possible for a premises to export using statements 1-5 for some diseases of concern, AND 1-11 (second set of statements) for other diseases of concern, as applicable, as long as all diseases of concern are addressed.

7. **QUESTION:** The premises has not conducted testing for one or all diseases required at the levels/ laboratories required for export to Canada, is export still possible?

**ANSWER:** Yes. The shipment can go under the “test and ship” model- where a qualifying sample size (typically 175 animals for populations over 10,000) of the *population of animals for export* may be tested **one time**, and if no disease detections are made in that single testing event, the tested population may be exported to Canada within 30 days of the date of the testing, PROVIDED, the population can meet the rest of the certification requirements

on the applicable certificate section for those diseases. In the example of the certificate for end use of [research and education](#), this means the population for export would have to meet all certification statements 1-11 (second set of statements) for those diseases where a premises, in addition to the qualifying one time population-level testing.

## CFIA PREMISES FREEDOM DEFINITION

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*\*\*:** It takes at least two (2) years of testing at [APHIS approved laboratories](#), controlled introductions and premises biosecurity for your USDA Veterinarian to be able to declare “premises freedom” for purposes of export to Canada. **Sample sizes in accordance with the AFS Blue Book do not meet the testing requirements for Canada for premises freedom for export.**

### STEPS TO DELCARE A PREMISES AS “FREE” FROM A DISEASE OF CONCERN FOR EXPORT TO CANADA

- 1) The premises must have controlled introductions. To declare and maintain premises freedom status, any introduced aquatic animals must be tested and found free of diseases of concern prior to introduction into the premises. Aquatic animal introductions into the premises must meet the same level of sampling and testing that is required for the export health certificate to Canada.
- 2) The premises must have an appropriate targeted sampling plan. The sampling plan should be designed for testing of apparently healthy fish and at the level required by the CFIA to provide a 95% confidence that disease of concern will be detected in the population, if the assumed disease prevalence is 2% (or 1%, as required by Canada in specific cases as noted on the CFIA import permit). This testing level is typically 175 animals *in a single testing event* for populations over 10,000. A “single testing event” means that the sample sizes of smaller testing events throughout the year cannot be added to equal 175 total for the year, the 175 animals must be sampled at the same time. For more information about determining sample size and population selection for testing, consult the guidance on [Sample Size Determination](#) posted on the APHIS Website. Sample collection must be conducted under environmental conditions (including temperature and time of year) that is conducive to detecting the pathogens (or that would facilitate the detection of the pathogen), if present. This means sampling should be done on the animals that have the highest likelihood of testing positive. Factors that could affect the likelihood of testing positive are; the most susceptible species, animals most exposed to pathogens, the time of year, the water conditions, the life stage. When there is morbidity or mortality that could be associated with a disease of concern at the exporting premises, it is expected that these animals are tested for diseases of concern and are not part of the sample of aquatic animals for premises freedom surveillance.
- 3) The premises must have a history of disease freedom supported by the targeting sampling plan for a minimum time period. Testing of the [appropriate sample size](#) as described in (2) above must have occurred **twice yearly for two years without detection of any of the diseases of concern listed, at a laboratory approved by APHIS.** After initial declaration, testing may occur once yearly at the same level without detection to maintain premises freedom status.

NOTE: if a disease of concern has been detected in the premises in the last two years or there has been a breach in biosecurity according to certificate requirements in the last 2 years, premises freedom cannot be declared for that disease until it is reestablished according to 1-3 above.