

USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, Strategy and Policy  
PROTOCOL FOR THE TRANSIT OF SWINE, SHEEP AND GOATS  
FROM CANADA TO MEXICO BY LAND THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

February 2023

This protocol describes the conditions required to transit small ruminants and swine by land from Canada to Mexico according to regulations found in 9 CFR Part 93.

## 1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1.1. The shipper must obtain an import transit permit from the:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)  
Veterinary Services (VS), Strategy & Policy (S&P)  
4700 River Road, Unit 39  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1231

Telephone: **(301) 851-3300, Option 2**

The permit application, **VS Form 17-129, “Application for Import or in Transit Permit,”** may be completed and filed electronically using the [eFile system](#), or alternatively by downloading it from the [APHIS web site USDA APHIS | VS Forms](#) and submitting by emailing [laipermits@usda.gov](mailto:laipermits@usda.gov).

Importers, agents, or shippers must apply for the permit at least 7 to 10 business days before the shipment arrives ([Import Notice - Live Animal Import and Transit Permits](#)).

- 1.2. The application for an import transit permit must include the route of transit, the number of drivers, the estimated travel time, and a written contingency plan (see section 1.6).
- 1.3. Animals loaded for transport in Canada must follow existing Canadian regulations for animal selection, loading, transport and transport planning: Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals ([Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals-Regulatory Amendment Interpretive Guidance for Regulated Parties - Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)).
- 1.4. On arrival at the U.S. port of entry, a copy of the completed [VS Form 17-29 Declaration of Importation](#) must be presented to the APHIS port Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO). In the “Remarks” section of the document, a declaration must be included stating that the swine, sheep, or goats will be retained aboard such means of conveyance or in an APHIS approved holding facility during transshipment. A copy of this declaration should be attached to the import transit documents carried by the transporter as well.
- 1.5. Transit shipments must contain only one species (no mixed shipments).
- 1.6. The animals must be fed, watered, and rested (FWR) during transport in the United States, following existing U.S. domestic animal transport regulations, at least once every 28 hours, including for any transport delays ([eCFR :: 9 CFR Part 89 -- Statement of Policy Under the Twenty-Eight Hour Law](#)). See section 4.
- 1.7. A written contingency plan to deal with potential emergencies enroute is required before the import transit permit is issued. At a minimum, the contingency plan will include an

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emergency contact number for the importer or their representative, veterinary contacts along the route who may provide assistance for health and safety issues involving the animals, and documented source(s) of water ([Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits](#)).

- 1.7.1. APHIS recommends the comprehensive contingency plan also address the following items:
  - 1.7.1.1. Transport conveyances/shipping containers.
  - 1.7.1.2. Loading densities and space requirements.
  - 1.7.1.3. Environmental/weather protections.
  - 1.7.1.4. Ventilation/air supply.
  - 1.7.1.5. Feed/water supply.
  - 1.7.1.6. Management of animals that are sick, injured, or otherwise unfit to travel.
  - 1.7.1.7. Accident/ vehicle break-down management plan.
  - 1.7.1.8. Animal escape plan.
  - 1.7.1.9. Deceased animal management.
- 1.7.2. APHIS VS port and local offices must be notified immediately for any emergency situations. The full contingency plan should include these APHIS contact phone numbers, as well as contact numbers for state animal health officials.
- 1.7.3. The full plan will be required in the event of an emergency or other issue with the transit.
- 1.8. An original import transit permit must accompany each truckload of swine, sheep, or goats to Mexico.
- 1.9. The importer/exporter is responsible for contacting the APHIS port VMO at both the port of entry into the United States (Canadian border), and the port of exit from the United States (Mexican border) at least 3 business days prior to shipment to make a reservation for inspection.
- 1.10. The importer/exporter, through their shipping agent and/or transporter, is responsible for providing copies of the USDA import transit permit and contingency plan to the APHIS port VMO at the port of entry, and the APHIS port VMO at the port of exit, prior to the arrival at the Canadian border.

## 2. CERTIFICATIONS

- 2.1 An official Canadian Export Health Certificate for the export of swine, sheep, or goats to Mexico must accompany the shipment.
- 2.2 A USDA APHIS import transit permit must accompany the shipment.

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- 2.3 For swine: An official Canadian health certificate qualifying the animal shipment for export to the United States may be added to the export documents, allowing the exporter the option of moving the animals to an appropriate receiving facility in the United States should transport issues occur, preventing shipment to the destination country. VS must be informed of the use of this option immediately, if elected, and the receiving facility/state for the animal shipment.

### **3 IMPORT TRANSIT REQUIREMENTS AT THE CANADIAN BORDER**

- 3.1 The animals must be presented to the APHIS port VMO at an approved Canadian border port of entry that is designated for the import of swine ([9 CFR 93.503\(b\)](#)) or ruminants ([9 CFR 93.403\(b\)](#)).
- 3.2 The APHIS port VMO will review the required import transit documentation and assess the animals for fitness to travel. The port VMO will issue a VS Form 1-27, *Permit for Movement of Restricted Animals*, and VS Form 17-30, *Report of Animals, Poultry, or Eggs Offered for Importation*. These forms must accompany the shipment to the Mexican border.
- 3.3 The port VMO will visually inspect the shipment to determine fitness for further travel.
- 3.3.1 At the discretion of the port VMO, individual animals that are not fit for travel, or the entire consignment, may be refused entry and returned to Canada.
- 3.3.2 Due to temperature extremes, animal health/ safety conditions, APHIS personnel will determine if offloading of animals during the assessment is warranted.
- 3.4 The port VMO may break Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) seals (if present) if necessary. The port VMO will place official USDA seals on the conveyance if no CFIA seals are present, or if they have been removed by APHIS for inspection at the port of entry. All seal numbers will be recorded on the VS Form 1-27.

### **4. FEED WATER AND REST REQUIREMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

- 4.1 At a minimum, import transit loads must meet U.S. domestic requirements for animal transport, including periods for FWR stops if the transit travel time will exceed 28 hours.
- 4.2 The USDA import transit permit will specify the route of travel.
- 4.3 The FWR may take place inside the truck if all the animals have room to lay down at the same time. The truck driver must certify when and where the FWR occurred.
- 4.4 The APHIS port VMO or designated APHIS representative will determine if offloading of animals during the FWR is warranted due to temperature extremes and/or animal health/safety conditions.
- 4.4.1 In the event that offloading is deemed necessary, conveyance seals may only be broken by an APHIS official or by an approved APHIS representative.

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- 4.4.2 The animals must be offloaded in an APHIS-approved FWR facility and remain under APHIS oversight for the duration of the FWR period.
- 4.4.3 After reloading, the conveyance must be sealed by the APHIS official or approved APHIS representative with official USDA seals, and these seal numbers must be recorded on the corresponding import transit documents.

**5. TRANSIT REQUIREMENTS AT THE MEXICAN BORDER**

- 5.1 The shipper must make an appointment with the APHIS port VMO at the port of exit that is designated on the U.S. import transit permit prior to shipping the animals, at least 3 business days prior to anticipated arrival.
- 5.2 On arrival at the U.S. port of exit, the port VMO will review paperwork to check for completeness and accuracy; FWR logs will be checked on the shipment's arrival at the port of exit to ensure compliance with the APHIS requirement for transits to comply with all U.S. domestic animal transport regulations, including for FWR periods.
- 5.3 APHIS port personnel will check conveyance seals on arrival to ensure they arrived intact; they will break USDA seals and begin unloading as soon as possible.
  - 5.3.1 For animals that remain at the facility overnight to be exported the following day, APHIS port personnel will place USDA seals on pens and the importer will incur user fee charges for next day service.
- 5.4 The offloaded animals will undergo inspection by a SENASICA veterinarian.
- 5.5 If any animals are rejected and refused entry (DOA, unfit for travel etc.), the APHIS port VMO will record this on the VS Form 17-41.
- 5.6 The APHIS port VMO will complete the VS Form 1-27 and VS Form 17-41 and email a copy of the completed forms to the NBP VMO within 48 hours; the SBP Veterinarian-In-Charge and Live Animal Imports should also be copied on the email.
- 5.7 The animals are not permitted re-entry to the United States after they have left the port of exit.

**6. IMPORT TRANSIT SHEEP AND GOATS REFUSED ENTRY BY MEXICO**

- 6.1. Sheep and goats refused entry by Mexico may proceed to Mexico for disposal, if the Mexican permit indicates that they will take all animals, alive, dead, or injured for disposal; or
- 6.2. Be transported back to Canada under USDA or CFIA seal after CFIA and APHIS have authorized the return of the shipment to Canada; or

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6.3. Be humanely euthanized for disposal at the landfill.

**7. IMPORT TRANSIT SWINE REFUSED ENTRY BY MEXICO**

- 7.1. The animals are not permitted re-entry once they leave the port of exit. If this has not occurred, the animals may be allowed entry into the United States provided they have an official Canadian Export Health Certificate for the export of swine to the United States and meet all U.S. import requirements. This type of scenario would be rare and would first need to be reviewed and approved by VS Live Animal Imports on a case-by-case basis, as there would be a number of additional requirements that would need to be met.
- 7.2. If not certified for entry into the United States (see section 2.3), swine refused entry by Mexico will be humanely euthanized for disposal at the landfill.

**8. USER FEES:** VS will charge user fees to the importer/hipper for any VS activities associated with the transit, including but not limited to:

- 8.1. Import transit permits.
- 8.2. Inspections at the U.S. port of entry.
- 8.3. Inspection or other services at the U.S. port of exit.