

Effective April 29, 2009, an alternative procedure for the importation of fresh equine semen from the United States into Canada is in place following an official United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) mandate to all of its regional offices.

This now provides Canadian importers of fresh (chilled) semen from the U.S. with two possible procedures for processing the required export/import documentation—the “Standard Procedure”, which has been in effect since January 30, 2009, and the new “Alternative Procedure” which is now announced by CFIA. Both procedures are outlined below.

With both procedures, exporters in the U.S. are still required to send (or present) the original U.S. Origin Health Certificate to the USDA for endorsement. Once endorsed, the Alternative Procedure allows for the USDA to fax U.S. Origin Health Certificates to the CFIA where they will be matched against copies of non-endorsed U.S. Origin Health Certificates accompanying fresh semen shipments to the Canadian port-of-entry.

This option only applies to fresh equine semen, which begins to lose its viability 24 hours after it is collected. The importation of frozen equine semen and embryos from the United States must continue to follow the procedure put in place on January 30, 2009 (see details below).

Importers using this Alternative Procedure for the importation of fresh semen into Canada will be charged \$35 for each shipment for document verification by the CFIA. The importer will need a CFIA client account or credit card on file at the CFIA.

This Alternative Procedure will enable suppliers that are remote from USDA endorsing area offices to ship fresh semen upon collection to the Canadian border while simultaneously sending the original health certificate issued by an accredited veterinarian to the USDA for endorsement. However, courier companies or any other transporters shipping fresh semen to the border without an USDA-endorsed health certificate must be informed that the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) will refer them to the CFIA for inspection and document verification.

**Fresh Equine Semen: Alternative Procedure for Importation from U.S.
Effective April 29, 2009**

1. Importers must obtain an Import Permit from the CFIA (see instructions below).
2. Notify immediately the companies/agents/owners in the U.S. that you wish to acquire fresh semen and inform them that a USDA-endorsed zoosanitary export certificate (i.e., U.S. Origin Health Certificate) is required.
3. They can obtain the required certificate from: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/ir/egs/animals/downloads/ca_eq_se.pdf
4. An accredited vet must issue a zoosanitary export certificate (i.e., U.S. Origin Health Certificate).
5. The exporter must immediately send the original zoosanitary export certificate to the USDA for endorsement and request that the USDA fax the endorsed certificate to the CFIA before returning it to the exporter. USDA has been provided with CFIA fax numbers.
6. Simultaneously, the exporter ships the semen to Canada with a COPY of the non-endorsed zoosanitary export certificate.
7. At the Canadian port-of-entry, upon inspection of the shipment and non-endorsed zoosanitary export certificate, the CBSA will refer the shipment to the CFIA.
8. Upon receipt of a faxed copy of the endorsed zoosanitary export certificate from the USDA, the CFIA will compare it against the non-endorsed copy accompanying the shipment. The importer will be charged \$35 for document verification.
9. Once verification is completed and the shipment is determined to be compliant, it will be allowed to enter Canada.
10. If the CFIA does not receive a faxed copy of the endorsed zoosanitary export certificate, or there are discrepancies with the certificate, the shipment will be ordered removed from Canada.

Importers are advised that once the USDA endorses each U.S. Origin Health Certificate, it is returned to the exporter. Importers must obtain the endorsed originals from exporters and keep them on file at the importers' premises for ten (10) years. CFIA inspectors may ask to examine these documents at any time.

Canadian importers are reminded that the existing procedure (the "Standard Procedure" outlined below) that has been in effect since January 30, 2009, is still an option for importing fresh (chilled) equine semen from the U.S.

Frozen or Fresh Equine Semen and Equine Embryos: Standard Procedure for Importation from U.S. Effective January 30, 2009

1. Importers must obtain an Import Permit from the CFIA (see instructions below).

2. Importers must notify immediately the companies/agents/owners in the U.S. that you wish to acquire frozen or fresh semen or embryos and inform them that a USDA-endorsed zoosanitary export certificate (i.e., U.S. Origin Health Certificate) is required.

3. To obtain the required certificate, please visit: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/i regs/animals/downloads/ca_eq_se.pdf

4. An accredited vet must issue a zoosanitary export certificate (i.e., U.S. Origin Health Certificate).

5. The exporter must have the original zoosanitary export certificate endorsed by the USDA.

6. The exporter must include the ORIGINAL USDA-endorsed zoosanitary export certificate with the shipment to Canada where it will be inspected by the CBSA and released to the importer.

Import Permit Instructions

1. BEFORE semen or embryos are shipped, all importers in Canada must obtain an import permit from the CFIA. To download an Import Permit Application Form for Live Animals, Semen, Embryos, Animal Products and By-Products, visit the CFIA website at the following link: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/import/permit_covere.shtml

1. The Import Permit Application Form is to be completed by the importer.

2. Next, contact a CFIA area office (a complete list of CFIA offices can be found at the end of this release). The completed application must be faxed or mailed with payment to the Import Office in the province you reside in or into which you will be importing the semen or embryos. CFIA have given Equine Canada assurances that you will be contacted by the Import Office within three (3) days of receipt of the application form with information on how to proceed.

3. Single entry (one time) permits cost \$35. Multiple entry permits are valid for one year and cost \$60. An agent or broker may use this method to do combined shipments of multiple stallions and/or exporters and/or destinations. To reference the responsibilities of Brokers, visit the CFIA website link at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/imp/kite.shtml> .

Canadians seeking timely information regarding import requirements are advised to use the CFIA's Automated Import Reference System (AIRS) at http://airs-sari.inspection.gc.ca/Airs_External/Default.aspx .

Since the news broke in late 2008 that a number of stallions in the U.S. had tested positive for contagious equine metritis (CEM), Canadian authorities have been on high alert. The U.S. investigation revealed that shipments of frozen semen from stallions either positive for CEM or associated with quarantined premises had been sent to Canada. If a country loses its CEM-free status, there are international trade implications.

To limit Canada's exposure, revised import restrictions for all live horses, semen and embryos entering Canada from the U.S. were put in place in early 2009 as a result of the expanding investigation into CEM in the U.S. in which 18 stallions and five mares have been confirmed as positive for *T. equigenitalis* in the U.S. *None of the positive horses have yet to be identified as the source of the outbreak. Under investigation are an additional* 135 exposed or positive stallions in 21 States and 638 exposed or positive mares in 45 States who are currently undergoing testing.

CEM is a highly contagious venereal disease, caused by the bacteria *Taylorella equigenitalis*, and is a reportable disease in Canada. It is spread by infected semen during artificial insemination or introduced to the genital tract on fomites, and the transmission rate is extremely high. Stallions are the most common source of infection with

T. equigenitalis,

persisting for months or years on the reproductive tract of untreated stallions. Mares can carry the organism without symptoms, after recovering from acute disease. Most infected mares do not conceive but those that do may give birth to a normal full-term foal that can carry the organism asymptotically. Nearly every mare mated to an infected stallion will become infected. Most mares recover after treatment by washing the external genitalia with disinfectants combined with a local antibiotic treatment but some become asymptomatic carriers.

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