Aquatic Animals: Disease Sampling and Testing Information

Last Modified:

Export disease testing of live aquatic animals may be required before shipping to some countries. The Laboratory Export Testing Guidance (2.99 MB) clarifies definitions and provides a decision tree outlining which laboratories must be used, in order to meet the specific requirements of importing countries.

APHIS-Approved Laboratories

For quick reference, see the APHIS-Approved Laboratories lists below.

Approved Laboratories

(PDF, 110.85 KB)

Find laboratories approved to conduct diagnostic testing in support of export health certification of aquaculture species.

National Animal Health Laboratory Network

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is a network of animal disease diagnostic laboratories that provides ongoing disease surveillance, responds quickly to disease events, communicates diagnostic outcomes to decision makers, and has the capability and capacity to meet diagnostic needs during animal disease outbreaks.

Export Disease Testing

The level of export disease testing of live aquatic animals may differ based on the importing country.

- Some countries allow for pre-export testing of the population intended for export within a specified timeframe prior to shipping, commonly referred to as “test-and-ship.”
    - Check the country’s IRegs web page using the drop-down menu on the APHIS International Regulations (IRegs) for Animal Exports page to see if there are country-specific criteria for testing (e.g., testing within 60 days of export for spring viremia of carp virus).
    - If there are no negotiated requirements posted to the country’s IRegs web page, then exporters must follow the APHIS Criteria for Test Negative Status (111.43 KB).
- Some countries require the facility/premises to be free from pathogens of concern for a minimum of 2 consecutive years prior to shipping, commonly referred to as “premises freedom.”
    - Check the country’s IRegs web page using the drop-down menu on the APHIS International Regulations (IRegs) for Animal Exports page to see if there are country-specific criteria for testing (e.g., testing within 60 days of export for spring viremia of carp virus).
    - If there are no negotiated requirements posted to the country’s IRegs web page, then exporters must follow the APHIS Criteria for Establishing Premises Freedom (258.61 KB) which includes testing to meet 95% confidence of detecting the pathogen at an assumed prevalence of 2%, as well as biosecurity, for a minimum of 2 consecutive years.

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