United States Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Veterinary Services Strategy and Policy

5601 Sunnyside Ave
Beltsville, MD

December 4, 2019
Latest Revision November 6, 2026

Import Requirements for Intact Equines From APHIS-Recognized CEM-Free Countries (Including U.S.-Origin) Seeking Permanent Entry into the United States After Temporarily Residing in CEM-Affected Countries

This notice details the USDA-required import documentation for intact equines greater than 731 days of age, or less than 731 days of age that have been bred (live or artificial), originating from contagious equine metritis (CEM)-free countries and temporarily residing in CEM-affected countries for up to 90 days in accordance with Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 93.301(g). Such equines may import into the United States without undergoing CEM quarantine and testing, provided all requirements within this notice are met. **The 90-day allowance begins on the date of arrival in a CEM-affected country and proceeds continuously from that date**, even if the equine subsequently resides in a CEM-free country before importing into the United States.

Intact equines eligible for U.S. import in accordance with 9 CFR 93.301(g) as described in this document include: (1) U.S.-origin equines temporarily exporting directly to a CEM-affected country; (2) U.S.-origin equines temporarily exporting to another CEM-free country (e.g., Canada or Mexico) and then to a CEM-affected country; and (3) equines originating from another CEM-free country and temporarily exporting to a CEM-affected country once every 12 months.

While in each CEM-affected country, the following CEM mitigation measures must be in place:

1) The equine must be kept separate and apart from all equines of lesser CEM health status, except when participating in an event or during exercise;
2) The holding premises must not be used for any equine breeding purpose;
3) The equine cannot be bred (live or artificial), or have any other sexual contact or genital examination while in each CEM-affected country; and
4) All transport must be carried out in cleaned and disinfected vehicles in which no equines of lesser CEM status have been transported since the cleaning and disinfection.

For the APHIS-recognized country CEM status, consult: Animal Health Status of Regions (USDA).

Required Import Documentation

1. *Import permit* – The importer of record must apply for and receive an APHIS-issued U.S. import permit **before** shipment to the United States.
    a. The permit application must include the itinerary for the duration of temporary export from the date of arrival in the CEM-affected country through the estimated date of import into the United States.
    b. Information about application processing times and requested changes to issued permits can be found in the following notice: Live Animal Import and Transit Permits (USDA).
2. *Export health certificate from the CEM-free origin country*
    a. U.S.-origin equines – The importer of record must present an original, a certified true copy, or a scanned copy of the U.S. export health certificate that can be verified through the Veterinary Export Health Certification System (VEHCS).
    b. Foreign-origin equines – The importer of record must present an original or a certified true copy of the export health certificate from the CEM-free origin country.

3. *Proof of date of arrival in the first CEM-affected country* – Acceptable forms include endorsement of health documentation by a Competent Authority or border control post OR documentation such as trace papers, airway bills, or foreign import permits. **Note:** Other types of proof may be accepted with prior approval by APHIS; please contact LAIpolicy@usda.gov for approval.

4. *Export health certificate from the exporting country* – The importer of record must present an original export health certificate issued or endorsed by the Competent Authority of the exporting country. The certificate must be compliant with the APHIS Equine Model Health Certificate. More information about acceptable health certificates can be found online at: Importing Live Equines and Equine Germplasm into the United States (USDA).

The documentation required to support an exemption from CEM quarantine and testing must be provided to APHIS port staff upon arrival to the U.S. port of entry. If the required documentation is not presented, if there are CEM documentation issues that cannot be brought into compliance, or if the time between arrival in the first CEM-affected country and presentation at a U.S. port of entry exceeds 90 days, APHIS will require CEM testing and quarantine at an approved facility. APHIS encourages importers to verify that all U.S. import requirements for this CEM exemption are met prior to export.

For more information, questions, or concerns, please visit the USDA APHIS Live Animal Imports website (USDA) or contact Live Animal Imports by email at LAIpolicy@usda.gov.