

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE	24-12	3/22/12
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**IMPORTATION OF LIVE CATTLE FROM MEXICO INTO THE UNITED STATES
FOR IMMEDIATE SLAUGHTER**

I. PURPOSE

A. This notice provides information to Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) personnel about the receipt, slaughter, and inspection of live mature and immature cattle from Mexico (hereafter also referred to as "Mexican cattle") for immediate slaughter. As of January 30, 2012, bovines from Mexico may be imported for immediate slaughter under a new protocol developed by the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services' National Center for Import and Export (NCIE).

B. Upon receipt of this notice, the Inspector-in-charge (IIC) or his designee is to conduct an awareness meeting regarding APHIS and FSIS requirements in establishments that intend to receive Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter.

KEY POINTS

- *Establishments approved by APHIS to import and receive Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter are issued APHIS VS Form 17-36. A list of eligible establishments is posted on the APHIS web site below.*
- *Designated employees of approved establishments are eligible to break official seals on cattle trucks arriving at the establishment.*
- *APHIS requires that cattle from Mexico for immediate slaughter be segregated (on the plant premises and at all times until slaughter) from non-Mexican cattle and must be slaughtered as a lot or sub-lots within 14 days of arrival at the plant.*
- *If there is a difference in number or identification of Mexican cattle presented at the plant and what is on the APHIS VS Form 17-33, APHIS requests prompt notification (within 24 hrs of arrival at the plant) from the authorized representatives of the establishment regarding unaccounted for animals.*

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 4/1/13

OPI: OPPD

- *The FSIS Public Health Veterinarian (PHV) is to complete APHIS Form VS 17-33 accompanying each load of Mexican Cattle and return it to the port veterinarian within 3 days of slaughter.*

II. DEFINITIONS AND FORMS

A. DEFINITIONS:

1. **Hold:** To “hold” the animals means that the establishment segregates the affected animals and does not move them to slaughter or outside the official premises. In all cases, the establishment is to move animals off the means of transportation and into an area or pen at the official establishment, and it is to hold the animals under humane conditions per FSIS requirements in 9 CFR 313.2. When necessary for inspection program personnel (IPP) to execute the holding of animals and to restrict their movement, IPP are to apply an FSIS Form 6502-1, “U.S. Rejected -U.S. Retained” tag (in this Notice referred to as “U.S. Retained” tag) to the pens containing the affected animals. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with APHIS, FSIS personnel are to contact the APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) through the District Office (DO) when a holding action is necessary.
2. **Authorized United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Representative:** Per 9 CFR 93.400, this term refers to an APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) employee; an FSIS inspection program employee; a State representative; an accredited veterinarian; or an employee of an accredited veterinarian, slaughtering establishment, or feedlot who is designated by the accredited veterinarian or management of the slaughtering establishment or feedlot to remove seals from the truck.
3. **Restricted Livestock:** For purposes of this notice, “restricted” livestock are livestock untested for tuberculosis (TB) or other diseases of human or animal health concern shipped under APHIS seal applied and removed only by authorized USDA representatives.

B. FORMS

1. VS 17-30, “Report of Animals, Poultry or Eggs Offered for Importation”
2. VS 17-33, “Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter”.
3. VS Form 17-36, “Inspection Report of Establishment [Approved] for Immediate Slaughter of Import Animals.”
4. Health certification from Mexico (Zoosanitary certificate)

III. BACKGROUND

A. The APHIS Veterinary Services Memorandum No. 591.15, Importation of Restricted Animals from Canada and Mexico for Immediate Slaughter, dated March 9, 1994, outlines the provisions for an agreement between establishment management and Veterinary Services (VS) for the approval of immediate slaughter of restricted Canadian and Mexican animals, as provided in Part 92, Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR Part 92). For 2012, APHIS has updated these requirements in the [Protocol for the Import of Bovines from Mexico for Immediate Slaughter](#) posted on the APHIS website.

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/downloads/import_sop_bo_from_mexico_for_immediate_slaughter.pdf

B. Through an MOU between APHIS and FSIS and the authority vested in the Animal Health Protection Act, APHIS authorizes FSIS to act on its behalf regarding verification of APHIS requirements in this notice. When FSIS personnel act on behalf of APHIS, any necessary communication to the APHIS Area Veterinarian-In-Charge (AVIC) is to be made through their FSIS District Office (DO).

C. All cattle of Mexican origin are identified with a blue metal ear tag. Mexican cattle exported for slaughter are not required to be identified with an “M” or “Mx” brand on jaw or hip.

D. Mexican feeder and breeding cattle are currently imported into the United States. Because of residues associated with the treatment of ectoparasites (ticks) that may affect the U. S. livestock industry, Mexican cattle imported for immediate slaughter may be at greater risk of having pesticide residues than domestic cattle.

E. Because of the increased prevalence of tuberculosis in Mexican dairy cattle, APHIS has banned importation of all Friesian (Holsteins) or Friesian cross-breeds from Mexico including for slaughter. Information regarding the status of TB eradication programs in Mexico is available from APHIS. More information on APHIS requirements is available from APHIS at link below:

- http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/downloads/import_sop_bo_from_mexico_for_immediate_slaughter.pdf

F. If Mexican cattle have met all the provisions within the protocol and are deemed eligible for importation by the APHIS port veterinarian, the port veterinarian will seal the shipment of cattle from Mexico imported for immediate slaughter with APHIS seals and issue 1) a completed VS Form 17-30, Report of Animals, Poultry or Eggs Offered for Importation; and 2) two copies of a completed VS Form 17-33, Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter. The numbers of the APHIS seals used on the trailer to seal the load will be written on the VS Form 17-33 along with any Mexican official seal numbers that remain intact on the conveyance. A copy of the Mexico health certification will also accompany the shipment to the establishment.

G. Before receiving any Mexican cattle, establishments approved to receive such cattle are issued VS Form 17-36 by APHIS. Within VS Form 17-36, there is a section that

references the seal-breaking process and specifies that the establishment is eligible to designate personnel who can break APHIS seals. Designated slaughter plant personnel will contact VS at contact numbers that will be provided by the relevant Area office within 24 hrs. of arrival of the shipment to notify VS that the correct number of bovines listed on the VS Form 17-33 arrived at the plant under intact sealed conditions.

H. FSIS requirements regarding identification, control, and disposal of specified risk materials (SRMs) for imported Mexican cattle are the same as for domestic cattle. See 9 CFR 310.22 and FSIS Directive 6100.4.

I. IPP under PHV supervision are qualified to conduct ante-mortem (AM) inspection of Mexican cattle.

IV. AWARENESS MEETINGS

A. IIC with Establishment Management

1. Upon receipt of this notice, the PHV or IIC on each shift is to ask the establishment's management whether the establishment intends to receive Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter. If the establishment has no intention to import Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter at this time, IPP are to request prior notification from establishment management if it decides to receive such cattle in the future. IPP are to then schedule an awareness meeting to discuss APHIS and FSIS requirements.
2. After the establishment indicates it intends to receive Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter, the IIC, prior to the awareness meeting, is to:
 - a. Notify the DO via the Front-line Supervisor (FLS);
 - b. Review information from APHIS regarding importation of Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter:
 - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/downloads/import_sop_bo_from_mexico_for_immediate_slaughter.pdf
 - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/downloads/slaughter_list.pdf
 - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/
 - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/acah/downloads/tb_update_handout_7_22.pdf
3. If the establishment indicates it intends to receive imported Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter, the IIC is to verify as part of the awareness meeting whether the establishment has:
 - a. Been approved by APHIS through VS Form 17-36 to receive Mexican Cattle for Immediate Slaughter. The PHV is to maintain a copy of VS

Form 17-36 in the government inspection file. APHIS has posted a [list of approved slaughter establishments](#) on the APHIS website:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/downloads/slaughter_list.pdf

- b. Designated establishment personnel eligible to break APHIS seals per VS Form 17-36;
- c. An understanding that all FSIS humane handling requirements for domestic cattle apply to Mexican cattle upon their arrival on premises.
- d. Procedures or scheduling in place to ensure that designated establishment personnel or IPP are readily available to break APHIS seals when Mexican cattle arrive in order to avoid the inhumane handling associated with the prolonged holding of cattle (e.g., on trailers overnight) or delayed unloading (e.g., during extreme weather conditions);
- e. Determined when it expects to receive the first shipment of Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter;
- f. An understanding of APHIS requirements including segregation of Mexican cattle from domestic cattle. Mexican cattle are to be slaughtered as individual lots or sub-lots until the entire load is accounted for and documentation is complete;
- g. Reassessed its HACCP plan per 9 CFR 417.4(a)(3) to anticipate and effectively address all food safety hazards that might be associated with any new source of livestock; IPP are to notify establishment management that cattle imported from Mexico for immediate slaughter may have higher risk of containing violative chemical residues;
- h. Incorporated procedures consistent with APHIS requirements regarding slaughter of Mexican cattle into its HACCP system;
- i. A procedure to verify that the tag numbers and the number of animals match the number on the official documents;
- j. Procedures in place so that when its employees break the truck seals, the establishment presents the seals and all official documents including VS Form 17-30, VS Form 17-33, and the Mexican Health Certificate to the PHV prior to requesting AM inspection;
- k. Procedures to promptly notify APHIS and FSIS IPP of APHIS instructions when the establishment finds discrepancies regarding travel routes, unexpected arrival or shipment, seals, official documents, number of animals, or identification tags;
- l. A procedure in place to ensure on-line IPP are aware when Mexican cattle are presented for slaughter (e. g. via pen card or drive card system);

- m. Implemented any additional employee or occupational safety measures when slaughtering restricted cattle (e. g. for brucellosis);
 - n. Obtained a copy of this notice from the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov if desired.
4. After the meeting, the IIC is to document a Memorandum of Interview (MOI) as evidence of the meeting with plant management with the MOI specifically detailing the information discussed in IV. A. 3. above.

B. The PHV-IIC with IPP

1. PHV-IICs are to review with IPP the following:
- a. Contents of this Notice;
 - b. Procedures associated with verification of all accompanying documentation and seals prior to conducting ante-mortem inspection of all Mexican Cattle;
 - c. How on-line IPP are to be notified when lots or sub-lots of Mexican cattle are to be slaughtered (e. g. pen cards or drive card);
 - d. How IPP are to best notify the PHV-IIC when Mexican cattle are retained for disease (e. g. granuloma) or any other extraordinary conditions and facilitate completion of inspection reports;
 - e. Appropriate precautions to use inspecting any restricted cattle (e. g. brucellosis, TB reactors); and
 - f. Additional tissue sampling instructions and procedures as directed by the DO based on previous testing results and guidance provided by residue staff in the Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD) - Policy Development Division (PDD).
2. If IPP are not already familiar, the PHV-IIC is to review procedures, requirements, and regulations associated with slaughter of restricted cattle:
- a. 9 CFR 311.2;
 - b. 9 CFR 311.15;
 - c. FSIS Directive 6100.2, Post-Mortem Livestock Inspection;
 - d. [FSIS Directive 6240.1](#), Inspection, Sampling, and Disposition of Animals for Tuberculosis - Revision 1

V. FSIS RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING HACCP SYSTEMS

A. Verify HACCP Plan Reassessment

1. Mexican cattle represent a new source of raw material for official establishments. Before the establishment receives Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter, the IPP are to verify that the establishment has reassessed its HACCP Plan and has determined whether these changes have affected the decisions in the establishment's hazard analysis in accordance with 9 CFR 417.4(a)(3).
2. IPP are to verify that the establishment's hazard analysis adequately supports its HACCP decisions regarding control of the potential food safety hazards associated with violative chemical residues from beta agonists, antibiotics, or pesticides associated with control of ticks that may be associated with imported Mexican cattle in accordance with 9 CFR 417.5(a).

B. FSIS Sample Verification

DO Responsibilities:

- a. When the DO is notified by the FLS or IPP that an establishment intends to receive Mexican cattle, the DO is to request a correlation on residue sampling programs with the OPPD-PDD.
- b. The DO is responsible for providing the FLS, IIC, and any relief supervision of each establishment intending to receive Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter the most current guidance from PDD regarding residue sampling programs.

VI. VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES WHEN CATTLE FROM MEXICO ARRIVE AT APHIS APPROVED OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

A. When establishments request that FSIS IPP break seals on trucks (e.g., at establishments where establishment employees are not available or have not been authorized to break seals per ([9 CFR 93.400](#)), IPP are to verify the following:

1. APHIS seals are present and intact on the livestock shipping truck; and
2. APHIS seal numbers on the truck match the seal numbers listed on APHIS VS Form 17-33.

B. If the seals on the truck are intact, IPP are to break (or observe designated plant employees breaking) the seals and verify as directed by the IIC that:

1. The establishment follows its procedures to immediately off-load the entire group of animals onto the official premises and then segregate those animals from any domestic cattle;

2. For each load, a VS Form 17-33 and a Mexican health certificate are present. The establishment may present other official documents with each load including a VS Form 17-30 and a VS Form 17-36;
3. The establishment follows its procedures to determine whether the Mexican health certificate fails to list any animals that are in the load; and
4. The establishment follows its procedures referenced in Section IV. A. 3. to ensure that each animal listed on the VS Form 17-33 is individually identified and accounted for.

NOTE: IPP are to consider Mexican cattle that are on the truck and that are non-ambulatory disabled or dead on arrival as presented for inspection. IPP are to verify that each animal is accounted for, handled humanely, and euthanized when necessary.

VII. DOCUMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

A. When IPP break the seals or observe the designated plant employee break seals upon arrival of trucks carrying Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter, IPP are to determine whether any of the following have occurred:

1. The Establishment is NOT eligible to receive Mexican cattle via VS Form 17-36 or posting on the APHIS website;
2. The transport seal numbers do NOT match the seal numbers listed on VS Form 17-33;
3. The establishment employee breaking seals is NOT designated (authorized) to break APHIS seals;
4. The VS Form 17-30, VS Form 17-33, or the Official Mexican Health Certificate does NOT accompany the load;
5. The establishment is NOT able to present the VS Form 17-33 or the Mexican health certificate at or prior to requesting ante-mortem inspection;
6. The number of animals listed on VS Form 17-33 does NOT match the number of cattle presented with the load; or
7. Any Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter are missing official “blue” ear tags.

NOTE: If the number of animals listed on the completed VS Form 17-33 differs from the number of animals actually delivered to the establishment, or cattle in the load are missing “blue tags”, then the IIC is to notify the AVIC via the DO of the discrepancy within 24 hours of the incident.

NOTE: The Mexican health certificate may contain strikeouts for animals that were consigned for slaughter but not loaded or otherwise removed prior to arrival at the U.S. Port of Entry.

B. When IPP have determined that there is any non-conformance with APHIS requirements specified in VII. A. above, IPP are to:

1. Unless instructed otherwise by APHIS, verify all animals are unloaded from the truck onto the official premises;
2. Institute a hold on the animals in the pen and restrict their movement by applying a "U.S. Retained" tag to the pens;
3. Unless the establishment has already notified the AVIC, promptly contact the DO providing details of the situation so that it can notify the AVIC with APHIS jurisdiction in the state where the official establishment is located.

NOTE: See http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/ for addresses of AVICs.

4. Verify APHIS directed corrective actions are satisfactorily performed by the establishment.

C. APHIS Procedure Verification

1. IPP are to verify the following establishment procedures required by APHIS:
 - a. Mexican cattle received for immediate slaughter remain on premises and are slaughtered within 14 days of receipt;
 - b. Mexican cattle are not commingled with domestic cattle; and
 - c. All Mexican cattle delivered are accounted for.
2. If IPP observe non-compliance with procedures required by APHIS, IPP are to:
 - a. Place a hold on the entire load (i. e. lot) using a US Retained tag applied to the pens of Mexican cattle or carcasses;
 - b. Immediately notify the DO providing details of the situation. The DO is to notify the AVIC; and
 - c. Await determination by AVIC in writing or via the DO regarding next steps.
3. For each APHIS non-conformance, FSIS IPP are to verify the disposition of ineligible animals in accordance with the AVIC determinations. If the PHV has concerns regarding the establishment's disposal of, or failure to dispose of, carcasses or parts of ineligible animals, he or she is to notify the DO so it can notify the APHIS AVIC. The AVIC will initiate any necessary investigation.

NOTE: For discrepancies between the number of animals on the APHIS VS Form 17-33 and the number actually received at the establishment, the AVIC will determine the appropriate actions to be taken. For other issues involving holds or other questions of disposition, the AVIC will directly notify the establishment on the disposition of the

affected animals (i. e. animals from the truck with the seals missing, broken, or otherwise tampered with), or an establishment may have a letter on file from the AVIC regarding the disposition of animals from Mexico.

D. HACCP Documentation and Enforcement

1. If the establishment fails to reassess its slaughter HACCP plan, fails to adequately support its HACCP decisions upon receipt of Mexican cattle for immediate slaughter, or fails to follow the written HACCP procedures related to slaughter of Mexican cattle, and the safety of the product cannot be determined per 9 CFR 500.2, IPP are to take a regulatory control action based on 9 CFR 500.2(a)(3) and not pass for slaughter Mexican cattle or retain inspected and passed carcasses and parts until all FSIS HACCP requirements have been met. IPP are to notify the DO via the Frontline Supervisor (FLS) immediately to initiate additional enforcement actions as appropriate.
2. If IPP observe non-compliance with procedures or corrective actions specified in the establishment's HACCP system related to the slaughter of Mexican cattle, they are to take regulatory control action and document noncompliance while performing a Slaughter HACCP verification task per [FSIS PHIS Directive 5000.1](#).

E. Completing and Distributing Forms

After the slaughter of a shipment of Mexican cattle, the PHV is to:

- a. Sign and date VS Form 17-33;
- b. Enter any pertinent ante-mortem or post-mortem findings information into the comment box of VS Form 17-33;
- c. Send a copy of the completed, signed, and dated VS Form 17-33 (Part 3) to the Port of Entry veterinarian as written on the form within 3 days of slaughter.

F. Record Retention

IPP are to keep on file for 2 years the following records:

- a. VS Form 17-36, "Inspection Report of Establishment for Immediate Slaughter of Import Animals;"
- b. VS Form 17-33;
- c. VS Form 17-30; and
- d. Health certification from Mexico (Zoosanitary certificate)

IX. DATA ANALYSIS

The Data Analysis and Integration Group (DAIG) within the Office of Data Integration and Food Protection (ODIFP) will work with Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD) and the Office of Field Inspection (OFO) to review available data for Mexican cattle to determine if potential trends exist.

Refer questions regarding this directive to the Policy Development Division through askFSIS at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com> or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development