

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

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# FSIS DIRECTIVE

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9900.4

5/26/20

## IMPORT APPLICATIONS

### I. PURPOSE

This directive provides inspection program personnel (IPP) with instructions on how to review, complete, or reject import applications, as appropriate, in the Public Health Information System (PHIS). This directive also provides instructions on how to proceed when errors or missing information are identified on a paper application or on an electronic application when data is pre-populated in PHIS through the Partner Government Agency (PGA) Message Set transferred from Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). This directive also explains the interaction of PHIS with ACE and electronic certification (eCert).

### II. BACKGROUND

A. The meat (including Siluriformes fish and fish products), poultry, and egg products regulations require importers to apply for the reinspection of imported product ([9 CFR 327.5](#), [381.198](#), [590.920](#), and [557.5](#)).

B. Before the implementation of the PHIS Import Component, applicants submitted paper versions of the FSIS Form 9540-1, *Import Inspection Application and Report*, for meat, poultry, and fish products, and the FSIS Form 5200-8, *Import Request Egg Products* for egg products. FSIS revised the FSIS Form 9540-1 to include egg products and additional information that FSIS needs for PHIS to assign applicable Types of Inspection (TOIs). In addition, FSIS now provides the option of submitting the import application data electronically or on paper forms. The PHIS Import Component interfaces with CBP's ACE system. The PGA Message Set electronically collects and transfers FSIS-specific import application data elements from ACE to PHIS.

**NOTE:** Applicants filing import applications electronically do not access PHIS directly, nor do they provide these data by looking at screens of PHIS. Applicants have unique software developed for the Automated Broker Interface (ABI). FSIS has provided a [guidance document](#) that provides CBP-approved software vendors' information on how to program ABI for FSIS data requirements. "Applicants" are importers of record, U.S. customs brokers, or self-filers approved by CBP.

### III. TYPES OF IMPORT APPLICATIONS

A. Except for an application that IPP create and completely enter manually from a paper [FSIS Form 9540-1](#), all import applications are automatically created by the interface between PHIS and ACE.

B. IPP are to be aware that applicants who do not file the PGA Message Set data electronically with CBP in ACE **can continue to submit paper applications** to FSIS inspection personnel at an official import inspection establishment. Paper applications must be provided to FSIS at the time the entry is filed in advance of the shipments presentation at the official import inspection establishment ([9 CFR](#)

[327.5](#), [381.198](#), [590.920](#), and [557.5](#)). Applicants **are not required** to file data electronically by means of the PGA Message Set; applicants **voluntarily** file FSIS data via the PGA Message Set. The types of applications are as follows:

1. **CBP Entry in ACE Without the PGA Message Set from a Non-eCert Country:** When applicants do not file entries with CBP in ACE that utilize the PGA Message Set, an application is created in PHIS by the data transfer from ACE based on the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) code used by the applicant. This is an *incomplete* application, which must be accompanied by a paper FSIS Form 9540-1. IPP are to complete the rest of the application in PHIS manually using the data provided on the FSIS Form 9540-1 and the official inspection certificate. The application will show in PHIS as **Status** Unsubmitted and, if expanded, the **Lot Status** CBP Received or No child records to display (lots) will be shown.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit	Lot ID	Lot Status	Product	Species	Processing Country	Proc. Est.	Shipping Mark	Date Lot Presented	Assigned TOIs
<input type="checkbox"/>		1	CBP Received							

PHIS Home | Build# PHIS 9.2.4

<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit	Lot ID	Lot Status	Product	Species	Processing Country	Proc. Est.	Shipping Mark	Date Lot Presented	Assigned TOIs
No child records to display.										

PHIS Home | Build# PHIS 9.2.2

2. **CBP Entry in ACE Without the PGA Message Set from an eCert Country:** When applicants do not file entries with CBP in ACE that utilize the PGA Message Set, an application is created in PHIS by the data transfer from ACE based on the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) code used by the applicant. This is an *incomplete* application, which must be accompanied by a paper FSIS Form 9540-1. IPP are to complete the rest of the application in PHIS manually using the data provided on FSIS Form 9540-1. The application will show in PHIS as **Status** Unsubmitted, and, if expanded, the **Lot Status** CBP Received or No child records to display (lots) will be shown. FSIS does not require a paper inspection certificate from a participating eCert country as outlined in [FSIS Directive 9900.1 Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#). Once IPP enter in PHIS the country of origin and the inspection certificate number provided on FSIS Form 9540-1, PHIS will populate the applicable eCert data in the import application.

**NOTE:** Countries participating in the government-to-government transmission of inspection certificate data as an alternative to the paper certificate (eCert) are identified in the [Import Library](#). Applicants are not required to provide information for blocks 12 through 30 on FSIS Form 9540-1 when an inspection certificate number provided is from an eCert country.

3. **CBP Entry in ACE with the PGA Message Set from a Non-eCert Country:** When applicants file entries with CBP in ACE, including the PGA Message Set, an application is created in PHIS by the data transfer from ACE. The HTS code used by the applicant to file the entry is irrelevant in this instance. ACE is programmed to transfer FSIS data no matter which HTS code the applicant has identified. This is a *complete* application. FSIS does not require a paper application (FSIS Form 9540-1), and IPP are not to request a paper application. FSIS does require the official inspection certificates when the country of origin is not an eCert country. The application will show in PHIS as **Status** Submitted, **Lot Status** PGA Received and, if expanded, lots will be shown.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit	Lot ID	Lot Status	Product	Species	Processing Country	Proc. Est.	Shipping Mark	Date Lot Presented	Assigned TOIs
<input type="checkbox"/>		1	PGA Received	Raw - Intact - Edible Offal	Pork	DENMARK	53	L001389		

4. **CBP Entry in ACE with the PGA Message Set from an eCert Country:** When applicants file entries with CBP in ACE, including the PGA Message Set, an application is created in PHIS by the data transfer from ACE. The HTS code used by the applicant is irrelevant to file the entry in this instance. ACE is programmed to transfer FSIS data no matter which HTS code the applicant has identified. This is a *complete* application. When the applicant provides the official inspection certificate number from an eCert country, PHIS reaches out to the foreign government's server and transfers the certificate data into the import application. FSIS does not require a paper application (FSIS Form 9540-1), and IPP are not to request a paper application (FSIS Form 9540-1). FSIS does not require the inspection certificate when the country of origin is an eCert country. IPP are not to request paper copies of inspection certificates. The application will show in PHIS as **Status Submitted, Lot Status ECert Received** and, if expanded, lots will be shown.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit	Lot ID	Lot Status	Product	Species	Processing Country	Proc. Est.	Shipping Mark	Date Lot Presented	Assigned TOIs
<input type="checkbox"/>		1	ECert Received	Raw - Intact - Primals and Subprimals	Lamb	AUSTRALIA	2306	IAG13158A		
<input type="checkbox"/>		2	ECert Received	Raw - Intact - Primals and Subprimals	Lamb	AUSTRALIA	2306	IAG13158B		
<input type="checkbox"/>		3	ECert Received	Raw - Intact - Primals and Subprimals	Lamb	AUSTRALIA	2306	IAG13158C		
<input type="checkbox"/>		4	ECert Received	Raw - Intact - Primals and Subprimals	Lamb	AUSTRALIA	2306	IAG13158D		

#### IV. IMPORT APPLICATION DATA ELEMENTS IN PHIS

There are five (5) tabs for the import application in PHIS. This section focuses on data elements within the Application, Importer/Applicant, and Lots tabs that are transferred from the entry with CBP in ACE, the PGA Message Set, and eCert. A **red asterisk (\*)** in the import application in PHIS denotes a required data field.

##### 1. Application Tab

Application	Importer/Applicant	Lots	Submit	History
Application Number		Inspection Certificate		Status

**Country of Origin\***: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE. There can be instances when the country of origin in an electronic entry will not be the same as the country on the paper inspection certificate. When this occurs, IPP are to correct the data in PHIS to reflect the country that is on the paper inspection certificate.

**Inspection Certificate Number\***: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set. If an applicant enters an inspection certificate number from an eCert country in the PGA Message Set and the number is not accurate, or if there is an issue pulling the data from the foreign governments eCert server, PHIS will not return results for an application search. If IPP enter an inspection certificate number manually and receive the following or a similar error message in PHIS, IPP are to send an email message to [importinspection@usda.gov](mailto:importinspection@usda.gov) for assistance.



Exporting Establishment: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert. FSIS regulations do not require the paper inspection certificate or eCert data to contain an exporting establishment number. When a foreign government's certification (paper or electronic) certifies either a warehouse or cold storage facility as the exporting establishment, IPP are to accept that establishment in the application. If the applicant identifies the processing establishment in the data as the exporting establishment, IPP are to accept the pre-populated data that appears in the application.

U.S. Point of Entry\*: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data that appears in the application.

U.S. Port of Unlading: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data that appears in the application.

Reference Number: This data element is obsolete. IPP are to ignore the data element whether pre-populated or not.

Type of Establishment\*: The radio button for this data element is selected by PHIS depending on the official establishment provided by the PGA Message Set.

Official Establishment\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set. The establishment is chosen by the importer. The establishment chosen by the importer may change after the applicant makes the entry with CBP in ACE due to business decisions during transit.

Estimated Date of Arrival\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set. This data element identifies the date the imported product will arrive at the official import inspection establishment. This date may change due to business decisions and logistics. When the date is surpassed, IPP are to follow applicable instructions in FSIS Directive 9900.1, *Imported Product Shipment Presentation*.

Bill of Lading Number: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE. IPP are to accept the data in the application.

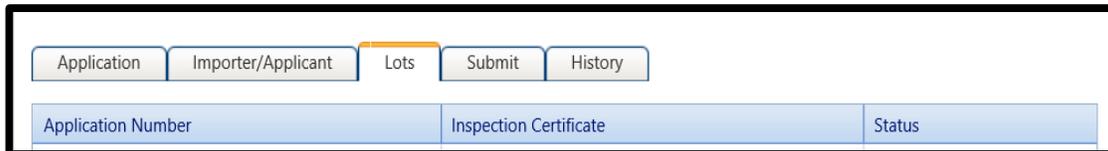
2. Importer/Applicant Tab



- a. The data elements under the Importer/Applicant tab identify the Applicant/Broker, Consignee, and Importer of Record. [9 CFR 327.4](#), [381.197](#), [590.915](#), and [557.4](#) require the name and address of the importer or consignee and the name and address of the exporter or consignor to be certified by the foreign government's Central Competent Authority (CCA) on the inspection certificate. These entities may change due to business decisions during transit. Except for the first names, last names, telephone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses, the data elements in this tab are transferred from the electronic entry with CBP in ACE. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data elements in this tab even if the information differs from that on the inspection certificate.

- b. The phone number and email address of the Applicant/Broker are the only required (\*) data elements that are not transferred from ACE. These data elements come from the PGA Message Set. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data in the application.

### 3. Lots Tab



Application	Importer/Applicant	Lots	Submit	History
Application Number	Inspection Certificate	Status		

Lot Number: This data element is automatically generated by PHIS.

Shipping Mark\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Customs Entry Number\*: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE. The 11-character Customs Entry Number (CEN) may or may not be alpha-numeric. The CEN is a combination of a filer code, which identifies the applicant and a series of unique characters selected by the applicant for the entry.

**NOTE:** Even though there are several data elements that can be searched for applications in the **Find Import Shipments** screen, the CEN is the primary data element for reliability of the search in PHIS. The CEN is a fixed number of characters (11) and a fixed format (no dashes, spaces, etc.). During weekly meetings with plant management, IPP are to stress the importance of receiving the CEN from plant management for the purposes of retrieving applications in PHIS. There may be multiple official inspection certificate numbers associated with the CEN. Inspection certificate numbers and shipping marks are not fixed formats in PHIS or the PGA Message Set, which means all dashes, spaces, etc. must be entered in the Find Import Shipments screen to match results.

**EXAMPLE:** An applicant enters the official inspection certificate number as 19-000 in the PGA Message Set, which may be the way the number appears on the certificate. If IPP do not include the dash in their search criteria and enter 19000, or perhaps 19(space)000, PHIS will not return results for that search. PHIS supports the use of wildcards (\*) in search fields to maximize search results. In the example, if IPP were to search 19\*000, PHIS would provide results for the search regardless of how the example certificate was entered.

Production Dates: These data elements come from the PGA Message Set or eCert. For further instruction of when production dates are required and when they are not, IPP are to refer to [FSIS Directive 9900.1](#), *Imported Product Shipment Presentation*.

Lot Net Weight\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Shipping Container Package Type\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Shipping Container Units\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Immediate Container Package Type: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Immediate Container Number Per Unit: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

**NOTE:** The **Package Type** dropdown menus mimic those available for the application through the PGA Message Set. Package types are not defined. IPP are to exercise discretion when reviewing these data.

**EXAMPLE:** For the purposes of reinspection, there is no difference between a box and a carton. IPP are to change the package type when necessary or accept the package type that was provided by the applicant. IPP are not to request the applicant to file a correction in ACE.

Seal Number: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert. FSIS requires a seal number for certain egg products ([FSIS Directive 9900.2, XIX Import Reinspection of Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products](#)) and carcass shipments ([FSIS Directive 9900.2, VI, B. Import Reinspection of Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products](#)) that are not packaged in anything but the shipping conveyance.

Process Country\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Process Establishment\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Source Countries and Establishments: This data element comes from PGA Message Set or eCert.

**NOTE:** PHIS will not map multiple countries or establishments if those are provided by the applicant in the PGA Message Set. When multiple countries and establishments are listed on the inspection certificate, IPP are to enter manually into PHIS the additional information not already appearing in PHIS.

Harmonized Tariff Code: This data element comes from the entry with CBP in ACE, or eCert. IPP are to accept the pre-populated codes in the application.

Process Category\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Product Category/Product Group\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

Species\*: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert.

**NOTE:** PHIS will not map multiple species; only the dominant species. If products with multiple species are listed on the official inspection certificate, IPP are to enter manually the additional information not already appearing in PHIS.

Supplemental Product Code: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data in the application whether pre-populated or not.

Product Description: This data element comes from the PGA Message Set or eCert. The PGA Message Set will replicate the Process Category, Product Category and Product Group in the Product Description data field. IPP are to accept the pre-populated data in the application.

## **V. REVIEWING IMPORT APPLICATIONS**

### **A. CBP Entry in ACE Without the PGA Message Set from a Non-eCert Country:**

1. A paper import application (FSIS Form 9540-1) is required to accompany a CBP entry in ACE when the filer does not utilize the PGA Message Set. IPP are to review the paper application by comparing the information to the foreign inspection certificate.
2. IPP are not to require any additional information on the paper application (FSIS Form 9540-1) other than the required data fields that are in PHIS.

### **B. CBP Entry in ACE Without the PGA Message Set from an eCert Country:**

1. A paper import application (FSIS Form 9540-1) is required to accompany a CBP entry in ACE when the filer does not utilize the PGA Message Set. IPP are to review the paper application in the same manner they review an application generated by a CBP entry in ACE with the PGA Message Set.
2. IPP are not to require any additional information on the paper application other than the required data fields that are in PHIS.
3. IPP are not to require information on the paper application that are required on the foreign inspection certificate because the data will pre-populate once IPP enter the inspection certificate number.

C. CBP Entry in ACE with the PGA Message Set from an eCert or Non-eCert Country:

1. IPP are to review import applications in PHIS before **Receiving** the lots in the **Event Type** dropdown menu. IPP are to focus on the required (\*) data elements in the application. IPP are not to require any additional information other than the required data fields that are in PHIS:

**Type of Establishment\***: IPP are to verify the type of Official Establishment identified in the application;

**Official Establishment\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the official establishment IPP are assigned;

**Estimated Date of Arrival\***: IPP are to monitor arrivals by following the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Customs Entry Number\***: IPP are to verify that the CEN is present in the application;

**Country of Origin\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the official inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Inspection Certificate Number\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Shipping Mark\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Lot Net Weight\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Shipping Container Package Type\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Shipping Container Units\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Process Country\***: IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Process Establishment\*:** IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Process Category\*:** IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#);

**Product Category/Product Group\*:** IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#); and

**Species\*:** IPP are to verify by comparing to the inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#).

## VI. CORRECTING MISSING OR INACCURATE DATA

A. Paper Applications (FSIS Form 9540-1): IPP are to review paper applications (FSIS Form 9540-1) for required data elements as outlined in Section V above. If IPP observe missing or inaccurate data on the paper application, and the data is correct on the foreign inspection certificate, IPP are to enter the correct data from the certificate in PHIS. IPP are not to take any further action on the paper FSIS Form 9540-1.

B. PGA Message Set Applications: IPP are to review applications transferred to PHIS from CBP entries in ACE with the PGA Message Set from eCert or Non-eCert Countries as outlined in Section V above. If IPP observe missing or inaccurate data on the application in PHIS, and the data is correct on the foreign inspection certificate, IPP are to update the application data in PHIS with the correct data from the certificate.

**NOTE:** Applicants can make correction in ACE, but because of CBP restrictions, an applicant cannot submit a correction in ACE after 10 days of the CBP release. In this instance, IPP are to make the corrections to the application in PHIS by comparing to the foreign inspection certificate. If it is an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#).

1. IPP are to make the corrections by comparing the application to the official inspection certificate. If an eCert country, IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 9900.1, Imported Product Shipment Presentation](#).

**NOTE:** FSIS does not have the regulatory authority to charge reimbursable services for correcting missing or inaccurate data in import applications. IPP are to refer to the foreign inspection certificate, or eCert data. IPP are not to hold shipments unnecessarily because of missing or inaccurate data in an import application.

C. If the application is missing information and IPP find no results after searching for an import application in PHIS, IPP are to request the applicant submit a correction in ACE or have plant management at the official import inspection establishment request that the applicant submit a correction in ACE. If there are still no results in PHIS, IPP are to send an email message to [importinspection@usda.gov](mailto:importinspection@usda.gov) with "PGA Message Set" in the subject line and provide the customs entry number with as much detail as needed to describe the issue. IPP will receive a response with further instructions.

D. IPP have the flexibility to determine the best way to verify information from paperless applications and certificates while performing verification of Certification and Label Verification TOIs. For example, IPP may take notes or print whatever reference material they feel necessary to accomplish those TOIs.

## VII. EVENT MESSAGING

PHIS supports incoming data from ACE, as well as event messaging back to ACE. ACE then provides that messaging back to the applicant in ABI. The automation of the Event Messages back to ACE depends on IPPs' actions in PHIS. PHIS messages include notifications of refusals, partial refusals, laboratory samples collected, failures to present, and releases.

**EXAMPLE:** A release message (**May Proceed**) is triggered when (1) all types of inspection (**TOIs**) show a Status of "Passed", (2) **Pending Actions** show "No records to display", and (3) **Lot Status** is "Released".

The screenshot shows the 'Import Reinspection' application page. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home > Shipment List > Lot Manager'. The page title is 'Import Reinspection'. Below the title, there are links for 'View Application' and 'Edit Application'. The application details are as follows:

Application No:	1341027	Inspection Certificate:	9129011
Lot ID:	1	Process Est:	2306
Shipping Mark:	IAG13086A	Process Category:	Raw - Intact
Customs Entry:	BHQ00950306	ProductCategory/ Product Group:	Primals and Subprimals
Country of Origin:	AUSTRALIA	Species:	Lamb
Importer:	JBS USA LLC	LotStatus:	Released
Applicant:	MURPHY OVERSEAS LLC.		
Date Presented:	09/05/2019		

Below the application details, there are buttons for 'Lot Tracking', 'Refused Entry', and 'Add Unscheduled TOI'. The 'TOIs' section contains a table with the following data:

	TOI	Inspection Level	Status	SME-Status Decision	Additional Information
COMPLETE	<a href="#">Label Verification</a>	Normal	Passed		
COMPLETE	<a href="#">Certification</a>	Normal	Passed		

The 'Pending Actions' section shows 'No records to display'.

The resulting actions provide the applicant with the release message (**May Proceed**) in ACE.

## VIII. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice through your supervisor, or submit your questions through [askFSIS](#). When submitting a question, use the "Submit a Question" tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field: Enter **FSIS Directive 9900.4**.  
 Question Field: Enter question with as much detail as possible.  
 Product Field: Select **Import** from the drop-down menu.  
 Category Field: Select **Basic Import Answers** from the drop-down menu.  
 Policy Arena: Select International (Import/Export) from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press **Continue** and at the next screen press **Finish Submitting Question**.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.

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