

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)**

Acceptance of Terms and Conditions. The use of your account means you accept the terms and conditions as outlined.

Explanation of Billing and Collections System for Veterinary User Fee Services

Introduction - The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, section 2509(a) as amended (21 U.S.C 136a) (referred to as the Farm Bill), authorizes the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to collect user fees. The Farm Bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to prescribe and collect to reimburse the Secretary for the cost of carrying out the provisions of the Federal Animal Quarantine Laws that relate to the importation, entry, and exportation of animals, articles, or means of conveyance. It further authorizes the Secretary to prescribe and collect fees to recover the costs of carrying out the provisions of 21 United States Code 114a, as amended, which relate to veterinary diagnostics.

See 9 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 130, User Fees, for further information on authorities relating to user fees.

1. Veterinary User Fees - The APHIS Form 81, Statement of Service, is the document used to record the services performed. It has a unique preprinted number in the upper right corner of the document. These documents are the basis for all charges billed to APHIS customers. All Statement of Services processed during the month are itemized on your monthly statement by document number providing the date of service, reference information and the amount. A copy of the Statement of Service is given to your representative at the time of service or upon request can be mailed to a location of your choice. For non receipt of support documentation or questions regarding the service provided, please contact the agency field office that provided the service. If you experience problems receiving copies contact the USDA, APHIS, Debt Management Team (DMT) helpline toll free at (877) 777-2128 or by e-mail at: abshelpline@aphis.usda.gov.

2. Billing Statement - Attachment 1 shows a sample of the billing statement along with an explanation of pertinent blocks. The billing statements will be issued the first week of each month. Following are the recommended procedures for reconciling your monthly statement:

Establish a folder for all APHIS invoices. These are the Statements of Services (APHIS Form 81) you receive each time service is performed. The serial number shown on the APHIS Form 81 corresponds to the document number on your monthly bill.

Hold all invoices for payment until they are verified against your monthly statement. If you do not have documents listed on the statement, or if there are any documents listed that you question, please call (877)777-2128. Any unresolved charges are considered unpaid and assessed are interest and penalties.

Payments: Payments are due by the 25th of each month. Return your payment with the top portion of the statement. **Be sure to record your account number on your check remittance.** If payment is not received before the end of billing cycle, the unpaid balance will be carried to the next month's bill as a "previous balance". Like the major credit card systems, we do not match payments to specific document numbers. Submit payments to the address shown on your statement.

3. Past Due Amounts - As stated above, charges not paid by the 25th of the month are subject to late payment penalties as follows:

Interest Charges - assessed against the full amount in the "Previous Balance" block, at a rate established by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Penalty Charges - assessed against any principal more than 90 days past due, currently at a rate of 6 percent per annum as governed by 31USC Sec 3717.

Administrative Charges - assessed administrative costs for processing "NSF" checks (\$20.00), or if extraordinary costs are incurred in collection of an account (e.g., collection agency fees).

In addition to the late payment penalties and in accordance with regulation 7 CFR 354.1, the following will apply:

All debtors who are more than 60 days past due will have all services placed on a cash only basis.

All debtors who are more than 90 days past due will have **all services suspended.**

If you do not resolve the matter of your delinquent debt, your account may be referred to the US Treasury for further action. Treasury actions may include:

- Offset your federal payments, including income tax refunds, salary, certain benefit payments (such as Social Security), retirement, vendor, and travel reimbursements and advances.
- Refer the debt to a private collection agency.
- Report the debt to a credit bureau
- Garnish the debtor's wages through administrative wage garnishment (no court order required).
- Refer the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation (*In compliance* with Executive Order 12988)

This action is authorized by the Debt Collection Act of 1982 and the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. Pursuant to 31 USC 3717 we will continue to add interest, penalties, and other administrative costs to your unpaid debt. *You will also be subject to additional collection fees by the entity(s) collecting this debt.* To avoid US Treasury referral, you must do one of the following:

1. Repay your debt. To repay your debt, send a certified check or money order to USDA, APHIS, PO Box 3334, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

2. Agree to a repayment plan. If you are unable to pay your debt in full, you must contact USDA, APHIS, Accounts Receivable at 1-877-777-2128, agree to a repayment plan acceptable to USDA, and make payments required in the repayment plan, or

3. Request a review if you believe the debt is not owed. If you believe that all or part of the amount outstanding is not due, you must submit your dispute in writing.

If you have filed bankruptcy or an automatic stay is in effect, you are not subject to Treasury referral. Please notify us and submit evidence of your bankruptcy. If you make or provide any knowingly false or frivolous statements, representations, or evidence, you may be liable for penalties under the False Claims Act 31 USC 3729-3731, and/or criminal penalties under 18 USC 286,287,1001, and 1002.

4. In Case of Errors or Questions About Your Statement - If you need more information about a transaction on your statement, write to us on a separate piece of paper at our customer service address: USDA, APHIS, Accounts Receivable, PO Box 3334, Minneapolis, MN 55403. We must hear from you no later than 60 days from the closing date of the statement on which the error or problem appeared. You can telephone us, but doing so will not preserve your rights.

In your letter, give us the following information:

- Your name and account number
- The dollar amount, document number, and date of suspected error
- A description of the problem

You do not have to pay any amount in question while we are investigating, but you are still obligated to pay the parts of your bill that are not in question.

If you have any questions regarding your USDA, APHIS, VS account please contact our customer service:

USDA, APHIS, Accounts Receivable
PO Box 3334
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Toll Free: (877) 777-2128
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