

**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Veterinary Services (VS)
Questions and Answers Regarding the Export of Breeding Cattle to Mexico**

1. *What kind of cattle may be exported under this protocol?*

This protocol may be used only for the exportation of sexually intact breeding cattle (males or females).

2. *Can I use the old protocol and health certificate to ship cattle now?*

Yes. The previous protocol for dairy heifers may be followed IF the exporter has an import permit (HRZ) for dairy heifers and all requirements for that certificate are met. However, you cannot import under the new requirements using the old import permit; the health certificate statements must match the import permit.

3. *Is there an age limitation for the cattle to be exported?*

Yes. Only cattle born after January 1, 1999, can be exported. This is the date agreed upon by Mexico and the United States.

4. *Is there any limitation on the breed of cattle to be exported?*

No. This protocol is intended for the export of breeding dairy and beef cattle of any breed.

5. *Is there an electronic version of the health certificate for accredited veterinarians to fill out by computer?*

Yes. To request a Microsoft Word version, contact Dr. Osmundo Castilla of the National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) at (301) 734- 8364. Note that the certificate cannot be submitted electronically; it must be printed out and signed.

Mexico will not accept hand-made corrections, erasures, line outs, or cross outs on the health certificate, and all statements on the certificate must apply to your shipment. You cannot use a previous health certificate and delete by hand the statements that do not apply.

1 *Please clarify certification statement #1 of the health certificate: “The animals were born in the United States of America or were legally imported into the United States of America from North America.”*

2 *Please clarify certification statement #2 of the health certificate: “The animals were born after the date from which the ban with meat-and-bone meal and greaves derived from ruminants was effectively enforced (January 1, 1999).”*

This means that the animals were either born in the United States or were legally imported into the United States from Canada or Mexico.

The animals to be exported must be born on or after January 1, 1999. This is the date of effective feed ban as recognized by Mexico

8. *In the “age” column of the health certificate, how should the age be described?*

The age must be listed in months.

9. *Certification statement #3 (“The animals are identified with a permanent identification system recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture”) does not specify what kind of permanent identification (ID) and does not specify that it must be visible. What types of ID are acceptable?*

The permanent ID required is a visible, metal, alphanumeric ID similar to those used for brucellosis vaccinates. Purebred registered animals that have a tattoo must also have a visible, metal, alphanumeric ID. Animals with radio frequency ID (RFID) must also have the visible, metal ID.

10. *Please clarify certification statement #4: “The United States of America is classified by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as a country of controlled risk with respect to BSE and complies with the conditions described in article 2.3.13 of the “Terrestrial Animal Code.” Is this a statement that an accredited veterinarian can certify?*

The United States is recognized as a controlled risk country by the OIE. Information about Article 2.3.13. is available at www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_2.3.13.htm. An accredited veterinarian may certify to this statement.

11. *Please clarify certification statement #5: “Upon inspection, prior to export, the animals were found clinically healthy.” What is the appropriate time frame for the inspection?*

The inspection must be conducted within 30 days prior to export.

12. *Please clarify certification statement #6: “The animals are from brucellosis-certified free herds or States and were negative to a card, or rivanol or complement fixation serologic test within a period not more than 30 days prior to export. The test will not be required for cattle less than 24 months-of-age and certified to be vaccinated against brucellosis using RB51 vaccine. The test is not required for animals less than 6 months of age”.*

This means that the animals must come from brucellosis-free States or from brucellosis-certified free herds (as per Uniform Methods and Rules) AND be tested negative within 30 days of export using one of the listed tests. Even from brucellosis-free herds, the animals must be tested to comply with the *Code of Federal Regulations*. For female vaccinates under 24 months-of-age, the animals need the metal eartag (vaccination tag or silver tag) and the tattoo listed on the ID column of the health certificate; no test is required for these animals.

13. *Please clarify certification statement #7: “The animals to be exported were negative for bovine tuberculosis (TB) within 60 days prior to export using an individual intradermal tuberculin caudal fold test using 0.1 ml of PPD tuberculin in animals older than one month of age, indicating date of the reading of the test. The test can be replaced by a certification of a TB-free herd or country.”*

All animals must be tested within 60 days of export unless they are less than a month old or originate from an officially certified TB-free herd.

Effective August 14, 2008, Mexico has imposed new import testing requirements for tuberculosis (TB). All cattle, 18 months of age or older, originating from the states of California, Minnesota, and Michigan require either (1) a negative TB test conducted within 60 days prior to the date of export, or (2) the animals were included in a negative TB whole herd test within 6 months prior to export.

Certification of TB test results, issued and endorsed by an APHIS veterinarian, should be attached to the export health certificate, and should include the following information:

1. Name of owner
2. Address of the herd of origin
3. TB test date, type of test conducted, total number of animals tested
4. Test results
5. Eartag number
6. Age of the animals (in months)
7. Breed
8. Sex
9. Brand

14. *Please clarify certification statement #8: “The animals are free of campylobacteriosis and trichomoniasis. Virgin females and pregnant females inseminated by artificial insemination do not need a test for campylobacteriosis and trichomoniasis. The animals did not show clinical signs of piroplasmosis.”*

Only females used for natural mating are required to be tested for campylobacteriosis and trichomoniasis; any valid test for trichomoniasis and campylobacteriosis is accepted. The test must be conducted within 30 days of export. Only a satisfactory visual inspection is required for piroplasmosis; no test is required.

15. *Regarding certification statement #12: Can an accredited veterinarian apply the seals, and where on the health certificate should the seals be listed?*

The accredited veterinarian can seal the vehicles on the premises of origin. The seal numbers will be noted on the health certificate below the endorsement block. If the shipment makes a rest stop, the seals will be noted in the addendum for rest stops accompanying the health certificate.

16. *What arrangements must be made to present animals at the border?*

- a) Importers/exporters must make a reservation with the States of Arizona, New Mexico, or Texas for pen space at the port of inspection. Pens with inspection facilities are located at Nogales and Douglas in Arizona; Santa Teresa in New Mexico; and El Paso, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Laredo, and Brownsville in Texas. Note that space availability at the border is very limited and must be secured prior to shipment.
- b) It is the responsibility of the federally accredited veterinarian and the shipping agent to advise the VS Port Veterinarian regarding the date of arrival of the animals. The protocol requires that the VS Port Veterinarian, or any full-time personnel previously authorized in writing by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), break the seals on the trucks to unload the animals in the presence of the Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA) approved Mexican veterinarian. SAGARPA has indicated that, if necessary, a State or accredited veterinarian can also break the seal in the presence of the SAGARPA-approved veterinarian. Full-time personnel previously authorized in writing by USDA include the VS Port Veterinarians, the State employees, and the accredited veterinarians.

During emergency situations for humane animal welfare considerations, and if the Mexican approved veterinarian is absent, any full-time USDA-authorized personnel are permitted to

break the seals of the cattle trucks. The animals can be unloaded 60 minutes after the expected time of arrival indicated in the log book, in the presence of only one of the officials previously mentioned. In this case, the official breaking the seals will file a report indicating the reason(s) why the animals were unloaded. All officials performing this task will have proper identification.

- c) At the port of Santa Teresa, New Mexico, Mexican customs officials do not process cattle on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays). This is not a SAGARPA decision; it is a customs ruling. For this reason, no shipments of cattle to Santa Teresa, New Mexico, should be scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays.

17. In the previous dairy protocol, Mexican animal tracking staff (the equivalent of USDA taggers) tagged the animals on the U.S. side. Will ID tagging still be conducted by Mexico?

Yes. The Mexican tagging will be conducted on the U.S. side in the same manner as it was done for dairy cattle.

18. In the dairy protocol, Mexican veterinarians would inspect each animal individually at our facilities for health issues. Will animals still be inspected at U.S. facilities by Mexican veterinarian, as in the previous dairy protocol?

Yes. The inspection procedure for breeding cattle will be the same as the dairy cattle protocol.

For additional information, contact NCIE at 301-734-8364.