

EXPORT OF QUALIFYING EQUINES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE FOR THE OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS AND EXPORTERS

READ THESE NOTES IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT

1. IMPORTANT

These notes provide guidance to Official Veterinarians (OV) and exporters. The NFG should have been issued to you together with export certificate 8959EHC. The NFG should not be read as a standalone document but in conjunction with certificate 8959EHC. We strongly suggest that exporters obtain full details of the importing country's requirements from the veterinary authorities in the country concerned, or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment.

****PLEASE NOTE ANY NON-APPLICABLE TEXT IN SECTION 1 (ISSUING COMPETENT AUTHORITY) & SECTION 2 (UK REGION OF PROVENANCE AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY) SHOULD BE CROSSED OUT (POINT 6 BELOW REFERS) SO REGION OF ORIGIN AND ISSUING COMPETENT AUTHORITY IS UNEQUIVOCALLY PRESENTED TO APHIS****

****PLEASE NOTE THAT HORSES ARRIVING TO THE UNITED STATES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH CERTIFICATES WITH REQUIRED ATTESTATIONS FROM EACH COUNTRY OF RESIDENCY (EU Member States: FRANCE, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND OR GERMANY) & FROM EACH APHIS RECOGNISED CEM-FREE COUNTRY WHERE THE HORSE COMPETE FOR THE 60 DAYS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING EXPORT TO THE UNITED STATES****

It is the exporter's responsibility to make sure that all the required export documentation is in place before the final export to the United States.

Countersignature Requirements

This certificate must be countersigned by a salaried Veterinary Official of the National Government in the Department of Environmental Food Rural Affairs in Great Britain or Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland.

In the case of exports to USA, an Official Veterinarian (OV) is an Authorized veterinarian of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or of

the Department of Agriculture, Environmental and Rural Affairs (DAERA) *.

All requests for countersignature must be submitted to the Centre for International Trade - Carlisle (CITC) at least two working days in advance of the requested date/time of countersignature using Request for APHA Veterinarian Countersignature of an Export Health Certificate (ET145) application.

The ET145 application can be submitted to CITC by email to processingteam@apha.gov.uk

Upon receipt of your ET145 application CITC will liaise with an APHA Veterinarian* at your preferred countersigning office/area to make arrangements for countersignature to take place and notify you of the arrangements made.

*In Northern Ireland, a DAERA salaried Official Veterinarian/certifying officer is authorised to countersign this certificate.

Supplemental Health Certificates (SHC) Countersignature requirements

SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH CERTIFICATES FOR RESIDENCY AND MOVEMENT FROM EU MEMBER STATES TO GREAT BRITAIN/NORTHERN IRELAND AND VICE VERSA MUST BE ENDORSED BY THE CORRESPONDING COMPETENT AUTHORITY**

Under the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Act 2024, it is an offence to export horses and other equines for slaughter, beginning in or transiting through Great Britain to a third country.

If the OV has suspicions that the consignment is being exported for slaughter in contravention of section 1 of the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Act 2024, this should be reported as soon as possible to APHA by calling 03000 200 301. In your report, please detail the following:

- EHC and journey log reference number
- Location and address of inspection, including CPH number
- Name and address of transporter and journey organiser
- Transporter authorisation number
- Details of the animals in the consignment (number, species, age)
- The reason for your concern
- Any relevant additional information

US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) guidance.

APHIS has summarised their guidance for certifiers and exporters at the following site : [APHIS guidance for completing the MHC](#)

2. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

Certificate 8959EHC applies to the temporary export of domesticated equines to the United States, **excluding:**

- equines imported for non-competitive public exhibition or entertainment purposes,
- Racing Thoroughbreds, where 1263EHC should be used.
- horses from France, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and
- zebras or other non-domesticated/wild equines.

Note as well that EHC 8959 replaces the following certificates:

- EHC 3987 - Export of male horses to the USA
- EHC 1261 - Export of female horses to the USA

EHC 8959 does not replace EHC 1263 - Export of thoroughbred horses in continuous training to the USA.

Horses are able to travel between the CEM-affected countries of France, Germany, Republic of Ireland and UK, as well as temporarily compete in APHIS recognized CEM free countries. Horses can travel between Great Britain/Northern Ireland, and on these instances APHIS advice is that they would accept the following:

- 2.1 An official health certificate must be issued by the last entity (Great Britain or Northern Ireland) the horse resides in immediately prior to export. This certificate must be signed and endorsed by the official salaried veterinarian of the exporting country government. If the official veterinarian is also the examining veterinarian, only one signature is required.
- 2.2 When UK origin horses reside in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the 60 days prior to export, the health certificates from the entity being resided in prior to residency in the exporting entity can be signed by the licensed, examining veterinarian. Only the health certificate from the exporting entity must be signed and endorsed by the official veterinarian of the exporting country.

Please note that APHIS recognises separately the regions and disease statuses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as originally set out in Federal Register Vol. 86, No. 155 and reflected in current APHIS regionalisation policy.

3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN (OV)

3.1 This certificate may be signed by an OV appointed by the Department for 8959NFG (Agreed 30/09/2026)

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Northern Ireland, who is on the appropriate panel for export purposes or who holds the appropriate Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)) authorisation.
OVs should sign and stamp the health certificate with the OV stamp in any colour **OTHER THAN BLACK**.

Certified Copy Requirements-England Wales and Scotland

Guidance concerning return of certified copies of EHCs has changed and only specific certified copies are required to be returned to the APHA. Certifying OVs must return a certified copy of EHCs only for the following EHC types:

- if the exported commodity is cattle, pigs, sheep, goats or camelids;
- if the certificate was applied for manually and the application documents have been emailed to APHA and not applied for via Exports Health

Certificates Online (EHCO) system. If you are required to return a certified copy to CITC, email a scanned copy to certifiedcopies@apha.gov.uk .

Retain a copy of all EHCs and supporting documentation certified for two years.

Certifiers are not required to return certified copies of other EHCs issued, however, CITC may request certified copies of EHCs and supporting documentation in order to complete Quality Assurance checks or if an issue arises with the consignment after certification.

DAERA Export Health Certificates: Provision of certified copies

aPVPs certifying DECOL produced Export Health Certificates must return a legible, scanned copy of the final EHC to the relevant DAERA Processing Office within 1 working day of signing.

Good quality photographic copies will be accepted by the department, where obtaining a scanned copy is not feasible - for example, where 'on site' certification is undertaken, and scanning facilities are not available.

For record purposes, a copy of the final Export Health Certificate and associated Support documents should be retained by the aPVP for a period of 2 years from the date of certification.

The Department will carry out periodic audits of all aspects of export certification to ensure that a high standard of certification is being maintained."

- 3.2 It is a USDA requirement that the silhouette contained within the health certificate 8959EHC must be fully completed in all cases. The identification of the horse must also be checked against the silhouette/microchip number in the passport when samples are collected for pre-export tests and when the horse is examined. Any discrepancies with the identification of the horse should be discussed with the local APHA office.

Important: To ensure horses being exported to US maintain their health and safety, APHIS requires that an examination be completed within 48 hours of departure from the port of embarkation to the United States. The port of embarkation is where the horses will be loaded onto the aircraft destined for the United States.

In instances where logistically the clinical examination is unable to be performed within 48 hours from the port of embarkation, APHIS is willing to accept that the examination performed be within 48 hours of departure from the United Kingdom. On the health certificate (only if words "from port of embarkation" appear), the words "...from port of embarkation" may be struck out, and instead "from the United Kingdom" written in and endorsed upon. The OV can make the change, but there must be some indication that it was an official / authorized change. This could be OV initials and stamp in the margin. APHA

countersignature on the certificate would then be sufficient for endorsement.

On these instances, in addition to the issued DEFRA health certificate, horses will be required to be accompanied by a health document issued by the respective competent authority of any foreign transit country that they reside in for 36 or more hours while in route to the United States.

1. You should ensure that the owner's declaration is stapled and 'fan stamped' to the certificate to make a tamper proof, composite document. Further guidance on this procedure can be seen at http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/Export_Instructions/Certification_Procedures/index.htm

A declaration should be signed and dated only by the person confirming a statement. A copy should be retained for your own records.

2. As stated in the footnotes, any non- applicable option must be deleted, for example, referring to the region of origin and corresponding competent authority issuing the certificate, the non-applicable option should be struck through with diagonal lines, so the region of origin (Great Britain or Northern Ireland) and relevant competent authority issuing the certificate (DEFRA or DAERA) is unequivocally presented to APHIS.

4. IMPORT PERMIT

Per USDA requirements, all live equine must be accompanied by a USDA import permit.

[Importing Live Equines and Equine Germplasm into the US | APHIS](#)

5. GENERAL HEALTH ATTESTATION-Part II

The Official Veterinarian (OV) must be satisfied, based on examination of the animal, supporting documentation, owner/exporter declarations where appropriate, and any official records available, that the requirements in this section are met.

Points 1-6

The OV must examine the equine on the day of certification and confirm that it is clinically healthy and free from signs of communicable disease.

The OV should also take account of the animal's history and any available records to satisfy themselves that there is no reason to believe the equine has been exposed to communicable disease during the relevant period. The OV must inspect the equine and be satisfied that it is free from ectoparasites at the time of certification.

The OV must obtain written confirmation from the owner or exporter, and review any available veterinary records, to verify that the equine has not received a live, attenuated, or inactivated vaccine, or any immune-modulating pharmaceutical or nutraceutical, during the 14 days before export.

For male equines, the OV must obtain confirmation that the animal has not been castrated during the 14 days before export.

The OV must obtain written confirmation from the owner or exporter that, during the relevant period, the equine has not been kept on premises where any of the diseases listed in the certificate have occurred, and that no such diseases have been identified on adjoining premises by the Competent Authority.

Where II.6(b) is certified, the OV must obtain appropriate official health attestations from the competent authority or official veterinarian in each additional country and be satisfied that the certificate requirements have been met.

The APHIS-recognised animal health status of a country or region can be found on the USDA APHIS Animal Health Status of Regions webpage.

Point 5- Adjoining premises

Adjoining premises are premises that border or are immediately adjacent to the premises of origin, irrespective of ownership. Where the OV is unable to verify compliance with this declaration from information available to them, disease clearance must be obtained through 618NDC before the certificate is signed.

Point 7.

The OV is not expected to have direct knowledge of future events. Certification may be based on a written declaration from the owner/exporter confirming that appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure the equine will be kept separate from equines of a lesser health status and from other domestic or wild livestock as described in the certificate requirements.

6. CEM REQUIREMENTS-Part III

The OV must certify the option that applies to the equine. Documentary evidence must be available to support the selected option.

Part III.1.c Equines Not Present in a CEM-Affected Country

Part III.1.c. cannot be certified for horses originating in the United Kingdom as the UK is not recognised as free from Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM).

For horses originating in the United Kingdom, Part III.1.c. to Part III.1.c.(iv).2. should not be certified and should be struck through. The associated declarations in Parts X.1.a., X.1.b. and X.2 do not require completion.

This paragraph may be certified where the equine has not been present in a country or region recognised by USDA APHIS as CEM affected during the 12 months preceding export.

The OV should obtain written confirmation from the owner/exporter that the conditions in paragraphs (i) to (iii) have been met.

Transit Through a CEM-Affected Country

Paragraph (iv) applies only where the equine transits a CEM-affected country before export to the United States.

Additional information must be completed in:

- Part X.1.a for placement of seals;
- Part X.1.b for breaking of seals; and/or
- Part X.2 where the equine is held in a transit country.

III.1.d Temporary Competition Entry (CEM Waiver)

This paragraph may be certified for intact stallions and mares that:

- have been present in a CEM-affected country during the previous 12 months; and
- are being exported to the United States for competition purposes for a period not exceeding 90 days.

The OV may rely on a written declaration from the owner/exporter and any supporting records available.

III.1.e 9 CFR 93.301(g) Equines

This paragraph applies to equines originating from the United States or another APHIS-recognised CEM-free country or region which have been temporarily exported to a CEM-affected country **for no more than 90 days**.

The OV may rely on a written declaration from the owner/exporter confirming that the conditions in paragraphs (i) to (iv) have been met.

III.2 Equines Requiring CEM Testing

This section applies to intact stallions and mares over 731 days of age, and bred equines less than 731 days of age, that do not qualify under Part III.1.

The OV must be satisfied that:

- samples were collected within 30 days prior to export;
- samples were submitted to a laboratory approved by the competent authority;
- samples were received by the laboratory within 48 hours of collection;
- cultures were incubated for at least 7 days; and
- the equine has not been used for breeding or breeding-related activities from the date of sampling until export.

Laboratory reports must be available to support certification.

III.2.i Stallions

For intact males, samples must have been collected from the mucosal surface of the prepuce; the urethral sinus, the distal urethra and the fossa glandis (including the diverticulum). All culture results must be negative.

III.2.ii Mares

For intact females, samples must have been collected from the clitoral fossa and sinuses and the distal cervix or endometrium where the mare is not pregnant. All culture results must be negative.

III.2.iii Previously Positive Equines

Where the equine previously tested positive for CEM, the OV must obtain evidence that:

- treatment was completed;
- at least 21 days elapsed between completion of treatment and re-sampling; and
- all subsequent culture results were negative.

Supporting laboratory reports and treatment records must be available for review.

7. SCREWWORM REQUIREMENTS-Part IV

The APHIS-recognised screwworm status of a country or region can be found on the USDA APHIS Animal Health Status of Regions webpage. OVs should verify the status of any country or region in which the equine has resided or transited before certification.

[Importing Live Equines and Equine Germplasm into the US | APHIS](#)

8. FOOT AND MOUTH, VENEZUELAN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS AND AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS REQUIREMENTS (PART V, PART VI AND PART VII)

The APHIS-recognised health status of a country or region in relation to Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE), and African Horse Sickness (AHS) can be found on the USDA APHIS Animal Health Status of Regions webpage.

OVs should verify the status of any country or region in which the equine has resided or transited before certification by checking on the link below.

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9. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CLEARANCE

Part II. 5. refers. Official Veterinarians may certify these paragraphs, in respect of residencies in the UK only, on behalf of the Department provided written authority to do so has been obtained from CIT, Carlisle on form 618NDC.

10. ADDENDUMS

If not applicable, the addendums may be removed or deleted from the certificate.

Where completed, the certificate number must be recorded in the space provided.

More than one addendum may be used where different authorised/government veterinarians are responsible for completing the required actions.

Part IX: Addendum for Equines in Transit from the Exporting Country to the Port of Embarkation

Complete this addendum only where the equine is held in a transit country for 36 hours or more before export to the United States.

The addendum must be completed by the authorised/government veterinarian in the transit country.

Part X.1.a: Placement of Seals on the Transport Conveyance

Complete this addendum only where an equine from a CEM-free country or region transits a CEM-affected country by land before export to the United States. This addendum must be completed by the authorised/government veterinarian placing the seals.

Part X.1.b: Verification/Breaking of Seals on Arrival in a Transit Country

Complete this addendum only where seals applied under Part X.1.a are verified or broken in a transit country. The addendum must be completed by the authorised/government veterinarian verifying the seals.

Part X.2: Verification of Status During In-Transit Holding

Complete this addendum only where an equine from a CEM-free country or region is held in a CEM-affected country during land or air transit.

The addendum must be completed by the authorised/government veterinarian responsible for supervising the holding period.

Part XI: Screwworm Mitigations

Complete this addendum where the equine has been present in a screwworm-affected country or region and does not meet the conditions of Part IV.2.

All required treatments, examinations and attestations must be completed before certification.

11. WELFARE

Exporters and transporters must comply with all the legislation for the welfare of live animals during transport. The welfare conditions required during transport are set out in Council Regulation EC No 1/2005 (as retained), implemented in England by The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006, with parallel legislation in Scotland and Wales.

If transported by air, animals should also be transported in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards.

Information about welfare during transport in Great Britain and the necessary requirements can be obtained from the Animal and Plant Health Agency: Welfare in Transport Team

Centre for International Trade

Eden Bridge House

Lowther Street, Carlisle

CA3 8DX

Phone: +44 (0) 3000 200 301

E-mail: WIT@apha.gov.uk

Or, in the case of Northern Ireland, DAERA at Dundonald House, Belfast.

12. DISCLAIMER

This certificate is provided on the basis of information available at the time and may not necessarily comply fully with the requirements of the importing country. It is the exporter's responsibility to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country. If these do not match, the exporter should contact the APHA Centre for International Trade, Carlisle or DAERA, via the link or e-mail address below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-apha>

DAERA - Email: vs.implementation@daera-ni.gov.uk