

APHIS Import Requirements: A Quick Guide for Commercial Importers of Plant and Animal Products

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for establishing regulations for the importation of animal and plant products and by-products. This factsheet is a quick reference guide to assist importers and brokers in determining which APHIS entry requirements apply to imports of fruits and vegetables, meat, plants and seeds, live animals, hides, trophies, or other agricultural products.

Plants and plant products include:

- Bulbs
- Cuttings
- Live plants
- Root crowns
- Seeds
- Cut flowers and greenery
- Fruits and vegetables
- Miscellaneous products (such as dried floral arrangements, craft items, or soil)

In short, if it is a plant, was a plant, or could become a plant, we regulate it!

Importers can use the APHIS Fruit and Vegetable Import Requirements (FAVIR) database to check the admissibility of fruits and vegetables. The FAVIR database is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/favir/. The APHIS manuals guiding the importation of plants and plant products are available electronically at www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/online_manuals.shtml.

The importation of plants regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires special documentation. For more information about permits for items regulated by CITES and ESA, contact the APHIS Permit Unit or visit www.cites.org.

The importation of Federal Noxious Weeds is prohibited, except under special circumstances, to prevent the introduction of nonindigenous invasive plants into the United States. For more information, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/weeds.

For more information about permit requirements for importing plants and plant products, contact the APHIS Permit Unit:

4700 River Road, Unit 133

Riverdale, MD 20737

Telephone: (301) 734-0841 or

(877) 770-5990 (toll-free)

Fax: (301) 734-5786

permits@aphis.usda.gov

www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_imports/

APHIS regulates animal products and by-products to prevent the entry and spread of foreign animal diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, foot-and-mouth disease, and highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1). Prior to purchasing or importing animal products, animal by-products, or products containing animal materials, you should ensure that they comply with APHIS regulations.

Animal products and animal by-products include:

- Animal waste and related by-products
- Blood and related by-products
- Bones and related by-products
- Casings
- Eggs and egg products from poultry, game birds, or other birds
- Hides and related by-products
- Live animals and related materials
- Milk and milk products
- Organs
- Meat and meat products
 - Equine (horses, etc.)
 - Poultry (chickens, etc.)
 - Ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats, etc.)
 - Swine (pigs, etc.)
- Miscellaneous products, including pharmaceuticals and dietary supplements
- Trophies
- Pet food and livestock, poultry, and aquaculture feed

Importers can refer to the APHIS Animal Product Manual for more information on specific regulations guiding the importation of animal products and by-products. The manual is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/apm.pdf.

For more information about importing animal products and by-products, contact APHIS National Center for Import and Export (NCIE):

4700 River Road, Unit 39

Riverdale, MD 20737

Telephone: (301) 734-3277/8364

Fax: (301) 734-4704/8226

AskNCIE.Products@aphis.usda.gov

www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports.shtml

For questions about operations at U.S. ports of entry, contact APHIS Veterinary Regulatory Support:

4700 River Road, Unit 129

Riverdale, MD 20737

Telephone: (301) 734-7633

Fax: (301) 734-8538

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CITES Permits and Certificates



Blue & gold macaw
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What is CITES and how does it apply to me?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) protects many species of animals and plants to ensure that commercial demand does not threaten their survival in the wild. It regulates trade in listed species and hybrids, including parts and products, through a system of permits. The Division of Management Authority processes applications for CITES permits for the United States. Under CITES, a species is listed at one of three levels of protection, which have different permit requirements.

- Appendix I includes species presently threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. CITES directs its most stringent controls at activities involving these species.
- Appendix II includes species that are not presently threatened with extinction but may become so if not regulated.
- Appendix III includes species listed by a range country to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade.

What CITES documents are required?

■ Import

The import of Appendix-I specimens requires both import and export permits. An import permit may be granted when the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the species' survival, is not primarily commercial, and the importer is suitably equipped to house and care for live animals and plants.

No import permit is required for Appendix-II or -III specimens, or for

specimens that qualify for other certificates (see below).

■ Export

The export of Appendix-I and -II specimens requires an export permit. Such a permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired.

For Appendix-III species originating from the country that listed it, an export permit is required. An export permit may be granted when the Management Authority determines that the specimens were not obtained in contravention of that country's laws for the protection of animals and plants.

■ Re-export

A re-export certificate is required for the export of CITES-listed specimens that were previously imported, including items subsequently converted to manufactured goods. A certificate may be issued when evidence of legal import has been provided. If you were the original importer of the wildlife or plant, you need to provide a copy of the canceled CITES permit that accompanied the shipment into the United States and, for animal specimens, the cleared Declaration for Importation (Form 3-177) for that shipment. If you were not the importer, you must provide copies of the importer's documents, as well as documents that show you purchased the wildlife or plant from the original importer, or a record of sequential transactions.

■ Introduction from the Sea

An introduction from the sea certificate is required for the import of Appendix-I or -II specimens taken on

the high seas outside of any country's jurisdiction.

■ **Pre-Convention Certificate**

If a specimen was obtained prior to the CITES listing date of that species—collected from the wild or held in captivity—it may be granted a pre-Convention certificate that will allow for the specimen to be exported. For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required.

■ **Bred-in-captivity Certificate or Certificate for Artificially Propagated Plants**

If a species meets the criteria for bred-in-captivity or artificially propagated as outlined in CITES resolutions, the exporting country may issue an exemption certificate (bred-in-captivity facts sheet is available). For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required.

■ **Scientific Exchange Certificate:**

Scientific institutions are eligible for this certificate, which authorizes import and export of museum and herbarium specimens. Such specimens must be shipped as non-commercial loans, donations, or exchanges among scientific institutions registered with CITES.

■ **Certificate of Origin:**

For Appendix-III specimens that originated from a country other than the listing country, a certificate of origin is needed to export the specimen. A certificate can be issued if the specimen was legally obtained within the exporting country.

What about shipping live animals and plants?

Permits for the shipment of CITES-listed live animals or plants may be issued only when the applicant demonstrates that the specimen will be humanely shipped. Live animal shipments must meet the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations or the CITES guidelines for transport. In addition, the import of live mammals and birds must meet the humane shipment regulations in 50 CFR Part 14.

What exceptions are there to permit requirements?

■ **In-transit Shipments:**

Under CITES, a shipment transiting a country must be accompanied by a CITES permit from the exporting country to its final destination. The shipment must remain under Customs bond. Check with other countries involved in the shipment to meet their requirements.

■ **Shipments within the United States:**

CITES imposes no controls on shipments between States or U.S. territories, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

■ **Personal or Household Effects:**

The United States recognizes the CITES personal and household effects exemption for wildlife and plants, or their parts and products, when the import or export is part of a household move or accompanying the

owner and intended for personal use (does not include specimens mailed or shipped separately). This applies only under the following conditions:

■ Appendix-II and -III specimens may be imported and exported without CITES documents, provided the foreign country does not require a CITES permit.

■ Appendix-I specimens may be exported by a U.S. resident without CITES documents, provided the foreign country does not require a CITES permit. Appendix-I specimens acquired abroad by individuals outside their country of usual residence may not be imported into the United States without CITES permits.

What foreign documentation might I need from a country that is not a member of CITES?

If you are importing CITES-listed wildlife or plants, or their parts and products, from a country that is not a Party (member) to CITES, you must obtain documents that contain all the information normally required by CITES.

How do I apply for a CITES permit or certificate?

1. Complete a standard application form (3-200) and submit it with a processing fee to the Division of Management Authority. Allow at least 60 days for review.

2. Contact your State wildlife or plant conservation agency and the CITES Management Authority of the foreign importing or exporting country to determine any additional requirements. (Visit the CITES Secretariat's website at www.cites.org.)

3. Some CITES-listed species are also protected by other U.S. laws with more stringent permit requirements, i.e., Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Wild Bird Conservation Act.

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