

## **Alert: USDA Implements New Equine Import Model Health Certificate**

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Effective date: April 13, 2026

From April 13 through June 14, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be transitioning to a new, comprehensive equine import model health certificate. The new certificate incorporates all information, data, and health attestations required for importing eligible equines into the United States and streamlines and reduces existing import documentation requirements.

**Key points:** In the new certificate, USDA has removed the requirement for pre-export foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) cleaning and decontamination—FMD mitigations will now only be conducted by USDA at the U.S. port of entry—and added pre-export African horse sickness (AHS) mitigations to enhance protections against introduction of AHS into the United States. The new certificate also implements the remaining provisions of an equine import rule published in 2023, namely:

- 1) Certification that the equine has not been gelded within the 14 days prior to export to the United States (if applicable).
- 2) Revision of the contagious equine metritis regulations to clarify that the prohibition on breeding includes both live and artificial, and to ensure accurate information regarding the whereabouts of competition horses during temporary import or export.
- 3) Addition of new requirements to ensure health and safety of horses prior to transport.

The [new model health certificate](#) and a [guidance document](#) for completing the certificate are available at [USDA APHIS | Importing Live Equines and Equine Germplasm into the United States](#) (under Veterinary Health Certificate).

**Eligible equines:** All equines can import into the United States using the new health certificate except for equines from Canada and Mexico; equines temporarily importing for noncompetitive public exhibition and entertainment purposes; racing Thoroughbred horses from France, Germany, Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom (Great Britain, Northern Ireland); Spanish Purebred horses from Spain; and zebras and other non-domesticated/wild equines. For more information on importing equines into the United States, please visit [USDA APHIS | Importing Live Equines and Equine Germplasm into the United States](#).

**Transition period:** During the 60-day transition period, USDA will accept either the new health certificate or a currently existing health certificate. Equines importing on a currently approved certificate must still be accompanied at the U.S. port of entry by supplemental health documentation as described at [USDA | APHIS VS Guidance and Other Documents Related to Importing Equines](#). No supplemental documentation need accompany the equines if they are imported in accordance with the new certificate.

**Beginning June 15, 2026, all health certificates for eligible equines received at U.S. ports of entry must reflect the content of the new model health certificate.**

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