

Effective immediately, USDA APHIS-Veterinary Services (VS) will accept U.S. veterinary export health certificates for live animals and germplasm that have been electronically signed and issued by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian through the Veterinary Export Health Certification System (VEHCS), a secure, online United States government-owned system controlled by APHIS.

ORANGE: You will now see most country VEHCS banners turned **orange** on APHIS' [IRegs](#) and [Pet Travel Website](#). This indicates the USDA Accredited Veterinarian can electronically sign and submit the health certificate through VEHCS. APHIS will print the submitted health certificate and continue to apply an ink (wet) signature and embossed seal to veterinary export health certificates during endorsement.

GREEN: Countries with previous agreements in place for acceptance of electronic signature of USDA Accredited Veterinarian and digital endorsement by the APHIS VMO will remain unchanged (green banners will remain **green**).

PURPLE: For countries that are **purple**, all certificates can be issued by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian with electronic signature through VEHCS, but whether or not APHIS can endorse digitally is commodity-dependent.

RED: Should a country inform APHIS-VS that electronic signature of a USDA Accredited Veterinarian is not permitted, the country banners on IRegs and PTW will reflect that and be **red**.

*****IMPORTANT: Regardless of the type of signatures applied, an original, hardcopy of the veterinary export health certificate must still travel with the shipment during the export process.*****

This action has been notified to all trading partners via WTO notification:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/export/wto-notice-hc>

The "Country Acceptance List for VEHCS" is posted and are kept current:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/export/iregs-for-animal-exports/vehcs/country-list>. We also have many helpful resources related to VEHCS available online: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/helpful-references/vehcs-info>.

By removing the requirement of an original signature of the USDA Accredited Veterinarian to be submitted via hardcopy to our endorsement offices, and replacing it with a secured digital submission of electronic documents, APHIS removes the need to physically mail certificates to our endorsement offices, thereby reducing health certificate processing times, costs associated with overnight express shipping, the number of person-to-person contacts, and the necessity of our personnel to physically handle paper documents. This also allows for maximum telework of our endorsement office employees who would otherwise need to report to the office to meet with customers or receive UPS/FedEx/USPS envelopes. This change will help protect public health and that of our customers and personnel.