

Verification Procedures for the Import of Canadian Cattle into the United States

Use the following scenario to learn about the verification procedures for the import of Canadian cattle into the United States.

Try to answer each question prior to viewing the answers. The scenario is for your benefit so that you may review the material. *You will not be scored.*

Establishment "XYZ" formerly received Canadian cattle and bison for slaughter. Therefore, when the opportunity to re-establish ties with former contacts in Canada arose, the establishment was interested in once again slaughtering Canadian bovines.

XYZ is a large corporation and has its own feedlots as well as several slaughter establishments.

Your duty station is the slaughter facility in Ricochet, Colorado. The facility is currently killing approximately 1,500-2,000 fed cattle a day, but has a capacity of 4,000 head per day. The facility believes they can get back to 4,000/day when they start receiving Canadian animals again.

XYZ is interested in receiving directly imported animals for immediate slaughter as well as bringing Canadian animals into their feedlots for finishing prior to slaughter.

What should the inspector-in-charge (IIC) at the XYZ slaughter facility do first?

The IIC should arrange an awareness meeting with XYZ cattle slaughter facility in Ricochet. Remember to document in a "memorandum of interview" who was present at the initial awareness meeting, the date and time of the meeting, what was discussed, and any documents that were shared with management. Also, remember to maintain a copy of the memo in the official government file and provide a copy to the plant management.

During the meeting, what information should be shared with the XYZ slaughter facility management?

1. Provide management with a copy of any relevant FSIS directives and notices.
2. XYZ will need to reassess their food safety system and SRM procedures.
3. XYZ should have procedures in place to check the number of animals that arrive, the age of the animals, and the identification of the animals.
4. XYZ should have procedures in place to ensure ineligible animals are not slaughtered.
5. XYZ should have procedures in place for "as a group" slaughter for any animals coming in from Canada for immediate slaughter.

NOTE: Refer to 9 CFR 310.22(e)(3) and 9 CFR 417.4(a).

What does "immediate slaughter" mean?

Immediate slaughter means that animals that come directly from Canada for slaughter must be slaughtered or euthanized within two weeks of entry into the United States.

Animals cannot leave the official establishment premises during this time.

Do you remember what "as a group" slaughter means?

From the APHIS Regulations:

9 CFR 93.436 (a) (6)

"As a group" means that at the recognized slaughtering establishment, bovines must be slaughtered as a group.

Remember that "as a group" slaughter is required when animals arrive from Canada for immediate slaughter. It is not typically required for animals that arrive for slaughter via a designated feedlot because the group may be separated and sent to different slaughter facilities.

What information should be communicated to the XYZ slaughter facility management?

Each plant is responsible for acquiring approval from APHIS to receive Canadian animals. Refer plant to the APHIS Web site for approved plants: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie>

NOTE: Inspection program personnel are not responsible for determining whether an establishment is approved by APHIS to receive animals from Canada.

When animals arrive from the port of entry, what should the establishment procedures address?

The establishment should have procedures in place to ensure:

1. The number of animals offloaded match the number of animals listed on the shipping documentation and that each has either a Canadian ear tag or an official USDA replacement ear tag (Bangs tag).
2. The animals are all eligible for slaughter. This means the establishment is responsible for implementing procedures for age determination/verification.
3. Ineligible animals do not go to slaughter.
4. Any new SRM procedures and changes in the Food Safety System are instituted upon arrival of the Canadian animals.

Will the facility be able to receive bison as well as cattle from Canada?

Yes.

Bison imported from Canada under the Minimal Risk Rule will have the same documentation requirements for import and slaughter as cattle. However, there are no applicable SRM requirements that apply to bison or buffalo.

If an establishment plans to receive bison from Canada, inspection program personnel should contact the Policy Development Division for guidance.

What makes a Canadian import animal ineligible for slaughter?

Many factors can make a Canadian import animal ineligible for slaughter.

1. Remember that only bovines born after March 1, 1999, are eligible for importation and slaughter in the United States.
2. Animals may be ineligible for slaughter if they arrive in vehicles whose government seals are missing or have been tampered with or if there are any concerns about shipping paperwork, identification, or numbers of animals received.

Prior to the arrival of animals from a port of entry, what verification procedures should FSIS inspection personnel have already performed?

Verify that the establishment follows its procedures to ensure:

- The number of animals offloaded match the number of animals listed on the shipping documentation.
- All animals have Canadian ear tags.
- The animals are all eligible for slaughter, that is the establishment has procedures for age determination/verification.
- Ineligible animals do not go to slaughter.
- Any new SRM procedures and changes in the food safety system are instituted upon arrival of the Canadian animals.

When animals arrive from the port of entry, what are the verification procedures for FSIS inspection?

You should have already verified:

- That the establishment has performed its food safety system reassessments.

- Into which programs (HACCP plans, SSOPs, or prerequisite programs) the establishment incorporated any procedures adopted as a result of its reassessment.

What are the responsibilities of inspection program personnel regarding the official seals of transport vehicles?

Inspection personnel should verify that an official seal is present and intact on the shipping truck. Usually this will be an official U.S. government seal with the letters USDA APHIS stamped on it. However, Canadian government seals may be seen as well.

Inspection personnel may also see official seals applied by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP seals would only be seen when CBP personnel break a Canadian Government seal at the border, and APHIS does not subsequently unload that truck.

What shipping documents must be received and verified by inspection program personnel?

Documents for animals coming directly from a port of entry for slaughter must include:

- An intact government seal (Canadian or U.S.) on the means of transport.
- VS Form 17-33: Animals Imported for Immediate Slaughter.
- A Canadian Animal Health Certificate.

NOTE: For animals coming to slaughter from a designated feedlot:

The VS Form 1-27 only has 16 lines on which to list animals. Therefore, you may receive more than one VS Form 1-27 with a load of animals.

What shipping documents must be received and verified by inspection program personnel?

Remember that animals may arrive with forms in addition to the VS Form and Canadian Health Certificate.

Inspection program personnel are to maintain copies of any additional documents in the inspection file. However, there are no verification or distribution activities that inspection program personnel must implement related to these other documents.

How will Canadian animals that are dead on arrival (DOA) or nonambulatory be handled?

ALL Canadian cattle on trucks that are non-ambulatory or DOA are considered to be presented for slaughter.

Non-ambulatory animals are to be humanely handled and euthanized.

Both non-ambulatory disabled and DOA animals are to be entered into the Electronic Animal Disposition Reporting System (eADRS) or the Public Health Information System (PHIS) after this system is implemented.

What are the "hold" procedures that are used by FSIS when there is a noncompliance noted with transport seals, or when there is an inconsistency in animal numbers?

FSIS program inspection personnel apply a "U.S. Retained" tag (FSIS Form 6502.1) to the pen(s) of Canadian animals after they are unloaded and segregated.

Canadian animals are held under the authority of the Animal Health Protection Act of APHIS, 7 USC 8306 et seq.

Where does all that paperwork go?

Once VS Form 17-33 (Part 3) is signed and dated by the PHV, a copy of the form is sent to the port of entry where the animals crossed the border, a copy is retained in the USDA inspection office, and the establishment receives a copy.

Congratulations!

You have completed the cattle slaughter plant scenario.