



SAFE FOOD IN ACP
A PROGRAMME FUNDED BY THE EU

HANDBOOK

12.9

TOPIC 12
Official
Controls

9

OFFICIAL VETERINARY CERTIFICATION



COLEACP



The handbooks are tools designed for civil servants in charge of restructuring the food safety system, and for all operators involved in drawing up the food safety policy and organising official controls (qualified civil servants, heads of laboratories, heads of departments in official organisations, those in charge of official controls, trainers, technicians, researchers, experts or company executives). They aim to provide an overview of the main points of a specific subject. All of the topics addressed by EDES during the training sessions are covered in separate handbooks.

The handbooks have been designed and drawn up by the EDES Training Unit in cooperation with the Consortium members.



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1. Background and principles of veterinary certification

International trade in foods of animal origin presents particular risks to importing countries because of the microbiological and chemical hazards that such foods may contain and the possible threat to the animal health status of the importing country that might arise from any differences in animal health status between importing and exporting countries. Each importing country has the right to protect both its animal health status and the health of its inhabitants by the imposition of specific import requirements, but these must be fair and justifiable. Official veterinary certification for food of animal origin is required for most international trade and for all exports to the EU from countries outside the EU [third countries] to demonstrate that all import conditions have been met.

Since veterinary certification underpins international trade and provides assurances to the importing country regarding the health status of the products imported and gives guarantees to the importing country that the imported food does not pose unacceptable risks to either animal health or human health, great importance is given to the accuracy, quality and reliability of certification. The quality of the exporting country's veterinary services, including the ethical approach to the provision of veterinary health certificates, is key in providing assurance to trading partners regarding the safety of exported animals and products. The quality and accuracy of veterinary certification is one measure by which the credibility of an exporting country is judged; deficiencies in certification can call into question the validity of a country's export control system and can result in loss of access to export markets.

Almost all international trade, including trade between the EU and other countries, is covered by the World Trade Association (WTO) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), which states that:

'.....no Member should be prevented from adopting or enforcing measures necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, subject to the requirement that these measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between Members.....'

Import control measures for food of animal origin are applied through the inclusion of animal health and public health requirements in official veterinary certificates. The development of a veterinary certificate for new trading partner countries or for trade in a new commodity between countries generally involves a period of consultation between the importing and exporting countries to ensure that there is a good understanding of the importing country's requirements and that the signing veterinarian in the exporting country is clear about the certificate's contents.

The SPS Agreement requires countries to base their import control measures on international standards. In the case of animal health, the international standard is that published by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and for public health, Codex Alimentarius.

2. Animal health import conditions



OIE is designated by WTO as the international reference body in the field of animal diseases and zoonoses (diseases transmissible between animals and man). OIE publishes the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the Aquatic Animal Health Code which are used by the veterinary authorities of OIE Members in the application of animal health measures to international trade in animal products.

The World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID) Interface¹ provides access to all data held within OIE's World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and is a useful basis for importing countries to use to assess the risks presented by imports from another country. WAHID provides a range of important information about each member country including, current and historical animal health situation, animal populations, zoonoses in humans and disease control measures.

The WAHID Interface includes a facility for an importing country to compare its animal health situation with that of any other prospective exporting country. This comparison feature categorises all of the OIE listed diseases into:

- Probable hazards - diseases that occur in the exporting country but are absent from the importing country. They should therefore probably be considered as hazards in trade.
- Possible hazards - no information is available for these diseases, either in the exporting country, the importing country or both. More information is required to determine if these diseases may be considered as a hazard
- Unlikely to be hazards - diseases that are either absent from both countries, or present in the importing country, and are therefore unlikely to be trade hazards. However, some diseases may still be considered a hazard, particularly if there is a disease control program in place in the importing country

OIE guidance on drafting veterinary certificates states that the following steps should be followed:

- list the diseases for which the importing country is justified in seeking protection, having regard to the disease status of the importing country and the exporting country. Importing countries should not impose measures in regard to diseases that occur in the importing country and that are not subject to official control or eradication programmes;
- list the health requirements for each of these diseases. These can be determined by referring to the relevant articles in the Terrestrial Code. The Terrestrial Code provides for various levels of sanitary status: e.g. disease free country, zone or compartment, disease free herd, vaccinated or non vaccinated population;
- OIE models (see Chapters 5.10 to 5.12. of the Terrestrial Code) should be used as the baseline for international veterinary health certificates. The content and form of the final certificate may be modified as required.

Importing countries may require imported food of animal origin to meet animal health standards that exceed those in the OIE Codes, provided these requirements are justified by a formal risk analysis. To ensure that all requirements are fair and are not unjustifiable discrimination against the importing country, formalised procedures for conducting risk analysis are laid out in Chapter 2 of the Terrestrial Animal Code.

¹ <http://web.oie.int/wahis/public.php?page=home>

3. Public health import conditions

‘Official and officially recognized inspection and certification systems are fundamentally important and very widely used means of food control; the following principles apply to such systems. The confidence of consumers in the quality (including safety) of their food supply depends in part on their perception as to the effectiveness of food control measures. A substantial part of the worldwide trade in food, for example in meat and meat products, depends upon the use of inspection and certification systems. However, inspection and certification requirements may significantly impede international trade in foodstuffs. Consequently it is desirable that the design and application of these systems should reflect appropriate principles.’

Codex Alimentarius: Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification CAC/GI 20–1995
Codex Alimentarius is designated by WTO as the international reference body in the field of food safety. Codex defines certification as:

‘.....the procedure by which official certification bodies or officially recognized certification bodies provide written or equivalent assurance that foods or food control systems conform to requirements. Certification of food may be, as appropriate, based on a range of inspection activities which may include continuous on-line inspection, auditing of quality assurance systems, and examination of finished products.’

In accordance with the SPS agreement, and similarly as for animal health measures, importing countries cannot require measures that exceed those in the importing country. In the case of food imported into the EU, it must comply with the legislation applicable to food produced in the EU or legislation in the exporting country that has been recognised as providing equivalent food safety assurance. The details of EU food safety legislation are beyond the scope of this Handbook but can be found elsewhere in EDES publications.

Many importing countries, including the EU, require food commodities for export to be produced in specifically approved business establishments in the exporting country.

4. Drafting of veterinary certificates

Before trade in any commodity between countries can begin, the importing country will initially take steps to ensure that the animal disease status and controls, food safety laws and implementation, and the veterinary services in the exporting country are able to give sufficient guarantees to protect animal and public health in the importing country. Details of this extensive process are provided in other EDES Technical Handbooks.

Once there is agreement that trade is possible, official veterinary certificates can be drafted for food commodities. In some cases the importing country may have existing certificates for the import of the commodity; in other cases a new certificate may be need to be drafted for the specific conditions concerning the commodity. In all cases good communication between the veterinary authorities of the exporting and importing countries is essential.

Certificates must include in any requirements only those statements that can be accurately and honestly signed by a certifying veterinarian. Requirements must not include certification of a country or area to be free of diseases other than notifiable diseases or the occurrence of diseases of which the veterinarian will not necessarily have knowledge. Certifying veterinarians should only be required to certify matters that are within their own knowledge at the time of signing or have been separately attested to them by other competent parties. Certificates should not require a veterinarian to certify matters that are outside his/her knowledge or which he/she cannot ascertain and verify.

The drafting of certificates must take account of the Principles of Certification (see below) that guide the professional conduct of certifying veterinarians.

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Code includes model veterinary certificates for international trade at:
http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_1.5.10.htm
- an excerpt from this chapter is included at Appendix 1.

Notes for Guidance

It is advisable that Notes for Guidance are drafted in conjunction with certificates to aid the certifying veterinarian. Where a certificate makes reference to the legislation of the importing country, the relevant sections of the legislation should be included and explained as necessary. Notes for Guidance should also include information about the extent of enquiries, tests or examinations expected to be carried out before the certificate is signed.

5. Responsibilities of exporting countries

► Animal health

OIE places responsibilities on exporting countries:

1. *An exporting country should, on request, supply the following to importing countries:*
 - a. *information on the animal health situation and national animal health information systems to determine whether that country is free or has zones or compartments free from listed diseases, including the regulations and procedures in force to maintain its free status;*
 - b. *regular and prompt information on the occurrence of notifiable diseases;*
 - c. *details of the country's ability to apply measures to control and prevent the relevant listed diseases;*
 - d. *information on the structure of the Veterinary Services and the authority which they exercise according to Chapters 3.1. and 3.2.;*
 - e. *technical information, particularly on biological tests and vaccines applied in all or part of the national territory.*
2. *The Veterinary Authority of the exporting country is ultimately accountable for veterinary certification used in international trade.*

Veterinary services in exporting countries must have systems in place to provide support for veterinarians signing official certificates. In particular, there must be a mechanism to provide the signing veterinarian with information about current national or regional disease status.

► Public Health

Codex Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification (CAC/GI 20–1995) states:

Food inspection and certification systems should be used wherever appropriate to ensure that foods, and their production systems, meet requirements in order to protect consumers against food-borne hazards and deceptive marketing practices and to facilitate trade on the basis of accurate product description.

The modern approach to food safety, enshrined in Codex Alimentarius texts and embraced in EU food safety legislation, is based on assessment of the risks throughout the entire production chain and the implementation by food business operators of measures to control hazards using the principles of HACCP. The general role of the Competent Authority for food safety in each country is to ensure that food businesses comply with food safety legislation and fulfil their responsibilities to control food borne hazards.

For certain food commodities, limits for the presence of food-borne hazards may be set for domestic production in the importing country and these may be included in the conditions for imported foods.

Food exported to the EU must be produced in accordance with conditions laid down in EU food safety legislation:

- Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law
- Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs;
- Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific rules for food of animal origin; and
- Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption.

The details of EU legislation are described in other EDES Technical Notebooks; it is essential that veterinarians signing official veterinary certificates for exports to the EU are knowledgeable about this legislation and its implementation in the exporting country.

Many importing countries (including the EU) require foods for export to be produced only in establishments approved for export to the importing country. It is the responsibility of the veterinary services of the export-

ing country to have procedures for approving establishments under the conditions dictated by the importing country and to ensure that these conditions are maintained at all times. Importing countries can be expected to carry out inspection and audit of approved establishments, and deficiencies in their structure and operation may result in removal from the list of approved premises and threaten access to export markets.

For imports to the EU, a list of establishments approved for export to the EU is published on the EU website:



http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/establishments/third_country/index_en.htm

6. Procedures for issuing official veterinary certificates

In order to maintain the integrity of official veterinary certificates and to prevent fraud and dishonest use, exporting countries must have systems in place to ensure that official certificates are available only to veterinarians authorised to sign them, and to ensure that certifying veterinarians apply a high level of professional standards.

The veterinary services of the exporting country should have appropriately organised procedures which ensure that blank official veterinary certificates are issued by efficient and secure methods. There should be a documentation control system that is able to correlate reliably the certification details with the relevant export consignments and with any inspections to which the consignments were subjected.

Procedures to ensure the security of blank certificates should include that certificates are:

- issued from a central official office or from regional official offices whose operation is overseen from a central office
- issued only on receipt of a request from known food business operators who are approved for export of the food commodity to the stated country.
- printed on good quality, water-marked paper that makes the production of forged copies difficult.
- sent directly to the authorised veterinarian who will be responsible for completing and signing the certificate
- sequentially numbered and a record kept of the details of the consignor and consignment

7. Certifying veterinarians

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Code states that:

1. *Veterinary Authorities of exporting countries should:*
 - a. *have official procedures for authorisation of certifying veterinarians, defining their functions and duties as well as conditions of oversight and accountability, including possible suspension and termination of the authorisation;*
 - b. *ensure that the relevant instructions and training are provided to certifying veterinarians;*
 - c. *monitor the activities of the certifying veterinarians to verify their integrity and impartiality.*

The authorisation process must ensure that, in addition to the possession of relevant veterinary qualifications, scientific expertise and experience to give them the competence to make sound professional judgements, veterinarians have specialist training in and knowledge of:

- national legislation concerning animal health and the control of OIE Listed diseases
- national animal disease monitoring and surveillance systems
- national legislation on food safety
- the prevention and control of microbiological and chemical food-borne hazards for public health
- animal and food traceability systems
- the use of veterinary medicines and programmes for the surveillance of residues of veterinary medicines in animal products
- the principles of international trade in foods of animal origin
- official procedures for the completion of veterinary certificates

Veterinary authorities issuing blank certificates should monitor and audit the performance of certifying veterinarians by scrutinising copies of all completed certificates which should be returned to the issuing authority immediately on completion.

Security in the export certification process, including electronic documentation transfer, is important. A system of independent compliance review is desirable, to safeguard against fraud in certification by officials and by private individuals or corporations.

8. Principles of certification

The dictionary definition of a certificate is a “written statement made with authority”.

In the case of an official veterinary certificate, the authority comes from the veterinary services of the exporting country and the professional status of the certifying veterinarian.

All certification must be based on the highest ethical standards, the most important of which is that the professional integrity of the certifying veterinarian should be respected and safeguarded.



Great importance is given to the integrity of veterinary certification, and guidance is available to aid veterinarians in completing certificates. The Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) has published The Twelve Principles of Certification, based on the professional guidance of the UK Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which are given below with further explanation.

The Twelve Principles of Certification

1. A veterinarian should be asked to certify only those matters, which are within his own knowledge, can be ascertained by him personally or are the subject of a supporting certificate from another veterinarian, who does have personal knowledge of the matters in question and is authorised to provide such a supporting document.

Matters not within the knowledge of a veterinarian, and not the subject of such a supporting certificate, but known to other persons, e.g. the farmer, the breeder or the truck driver, should be the subject of a declaration by those persons only.

Individual certifying veterinarians will not have personal knowledge of the disease status of all animals in the exporting country and must therefore be provided with a document from the veterinary authority to enable them to sign a declaration of country freedom from specified diseases. Such documents should be applicable for a defined short period only and there should be a system to inform the veterinarian if the disease situation changes within that period.

Where certifying veterinarians do not have sufficient personal knowledge of a consignment they must obtain written declarations from persons who have the knowledge.

Example

‘The animals from which the meat products were derived have been in the country for at least 90 days prior to slaughter’

The producer of the meat product will be able to provide such a supporting declaration, but the certifying veterinarian must be confident that the producer is capable to do this i.e. that the producer and the abattoir operator(s) have effective traceability systems.

Consignments of food commodities for export will often have undergone processing at several food establishments. Certification in such cases will rely on the underlying legislation and its enforcement in the exporting country.

Example

I declare that I am aware of the relevant provisions of Regulations (EC)No. 178/2002,(EC) No. 852/2004 and (EC) No.853/2004 and certify that the meat products have been produced from raw materials which meet the requirements of Sections I to VI of Annex III to Regulation EC) No. 853/2004.

This declaration clearly requires the certifying veterinarian to have a sound knowledge of the legislation of the importing country. Ideally the 'relevant provisions' of the Regulations will be included in notes for guidance for the certificate. Provided the certifying veterinarian is fully aware of the origin of the raw materials, he/she will rely on the fact that they have been produced in an approved establishment, operating under appropriate legislation and subject to official controls, to certify that the raw materials meet the required standard.

2. Neither a veterinarian nor any person described in 1 above should be requested or required to sign anything relating to matters which cannot be verified by the signatory.

Certifying veterinarians must ensure that they only sign declarations for which they are confident they have the necessary knowledge. If uncertain about any parts of a certificate they should request supporting declarations from other parties or seek assistance for the veterinary authorities. All certificates should be drawn up with collaboration between the exporter and importer countries to ensure that there are no components that cannot be signed. Any attestations that are subject to interpretation should be covered in accompanying notes for guidance that provide clear directions to the certifying veterinarian.

When supporting documents from other parties are relied upon, certifying veterinarians must ensure that persons providing them are fully aware of what they are declaring and have the knowledge and authority to do so.

Certifying veterinarians must resist pressure to sign certificates when they are not confident that they are able to. They must always be aware of their professional duty to maintain ethical standards in certification.

3. Veterinarians should not issue a certificate which might raise questions of a possible conflict of interest, e.g. in relation to their own animals.

Certifying veterinarians must not sign certificates when there is any possibility that their independence and professional credibility might be called into question.

4. All certificates should be written in terms which are as simple and easy to understand as possible.

This principle is self-explanatory, but for complex issues it may be necessary, and is acceptable, to provide further information in guidance notes accompanying a certificate. Where an importing country has failed to make its requirements clear in a certificate, consideration should be given to re-drafting the certificate to correct this.

5. Certificates should not use words or phrases, which are capable of more than one interpretation.

Care must be taken when drafting certificates that all words used are not subject to different interpretation and that any translations into other languages do not result in misinterpretation.

6. Certificates should be:-

- a. produced on one sheet of paper or, where more than one page is required, in such a form that any two or more pages are part of an integrated whole and indivisible;*
- b. given a unique number, with records being retained by the issuing authority of persons to whom certificates bearing particular numbers were supplied.*

The physical form of certificates should be designed to prevent or deter fraudulent alteration or additions. Where separate pages, schedules or supplementary declarations are included they should bear the unique certificate number and should be joined and stamped in such a way as to prevent substitution of pages e.g. fan stamping (see Appendix 4).

7. *Certificates should be written in the language of the veterinarian signing them, and accompanied by an official translation of the certificate into a language of the country of ultimate destination.*

It is essential that both the certifying veterinarian in the exporting country and the officials responsible for carrying out checks in the importing country can read and understand. Veterinarians must not sign certificates that they cannot fully understand.

8. *Certificates should identify animals individually except in cases where this is impractical e.g. day old chicks.*

This principle applies equally to consignments of foods of animal origin. A certificate is worthless unless it can be reliably related to the consignment it concerns. Identification of consignments includes the marks on the shipping container, any seals used to close the containers, and the establishment identification mark on packaging. For exports to the EU, the unique identification mark of the production establishment must appear on all packaging and must be registered on the EU list of approved premises for the country.

9. *Certificates should not require a veterinarian to certify that there has been compliance with the law of the Community or a third country unless the provisions of the law are set out clearly on the certificate or have been provided to him by the issuing authority.*

This follows from Principle 1 that certifying veterinarians should only certify for matters within their own knowledge. Certifying veterinarians will generally not be fully aware of the details of the legislation of other countries. Where a certificate requires the veterinarian to certify compliance with the laws of other countries, the relevant details of the law applying to the commodity should be set out in guidance notes accompanying the certificate.

10. *Where appropriate, notes for guidance should be provided to the certifying veterinarian by the issuing authority indicating the extent of the enquiries he is expected to make, the examinations he is required to carry out, or to clarify any details of the certificate which may require further interpretation.*

Notes for Guidance are an important component of the certification process. The content of Notes for Guidance should be agreed between the importing and exporting countries in conjunction with agreement on the certificate itself.

11. *Certificates should always be issued and presented in the original. Photocopies are not acceptable. Provided that:-*
- a. a copy of the certificate (clearly marked "COPY") should always be provided to the authority by whom the certificates were issued - see 6 above; and*
 - b. where, for any good and sufficient reason (such as damage in transit) a duplicate certificate is authorised and supplied by the issuing authority; this must be clearly marked "duplicate" before issue.*

Veterinary certificates are important and valuable documents and certifying veterinarians must be aware of importance of these documents and there may be financial incentives for dishonest practices. Every effort must be made to prevent or deter fraudulent alteration or substitution. Since it is possible for copies of documents to be made with alterations to parts of the certificate that may be difficult to detect, export consignments must always be accompanied by the original, signed document. Consignments of foods may be rejected by the importing country if officials inspecting imported consignments have reason to believe that there are discrepancies with the accompanying certificates.

National veterinary authorities should require certifying veterinarians to make copies of completed certificated and to return these to the office that issued the blank certificate. Such copies enable the veterinary authority to ensure that all the certificates they issue are used correctly and to monitor and audit the performance of certifying veterinarians in the completion of official certificates.

All official copies of veterinary certificates must be marked as copies. Copies should be endorsed with 'Copy' or 'Certified copy' and the front page and signed by the certifying veterinarian. Similarly, where it is necessary to issue a duplicate copy of a certificate, it must be clearly marked as such and signed by the certifying veterinarian.

12. When signing a certificate, a veterinarian should ensure that:-
- a. he signs and completes any manuscript portions in a colour of ink which does not readily photocopy i.e. a colour other than black;
 - b. the certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those which are indicated on the face of the certificate to be permissible, and subject to such changes being initialled and stamped by a veterinarian;
 - c. the certificate bears not only his signature but also, in clear lettering, his name, qualifications and address and (where appropriate) his official or practice stamps;
 - d. the certificate bears the date on which the certificate was signed and issued and (where appropriate) the time for which the certificate will remain valid;
 - e. no part of the certificate is left blank so that it could subsequently be completed by some person other than the veterinarian.

Certificates may be completed in type or in manuscript (hand-written). Where manuscript is used, coloured ink other than black should be used to deter fraudulent photocopying. Certificates must always be signed in coloured ink.

All certificates should be drawn up with clear instructions about sections or declarations that may be deleted if applicable.

Some certificates are designed to cover more than one commodity and require sections not relevant to the consignment to be deleted.

Example

The EU certificate for the importation of meat products at Appendix 3 can be used for meat products from several different food animal species (including bovine animals, poultry, pigs and sheep). Since there are different animal health requirements for the different species there are sections in the animal health attestation in Section II.1 that are relevant to one species and not to others. The certificate is clearly marked throughout (by the prefix '(2)') that they may be deleted as appropriate.

Example

In the case of dairy products made from raw milk sourced from animals other than cows, ewes, goats or buffaloes have undergone, prior to import into the territory of the European Union:

either [(i) a sterilisation process, to achieve an F0 value equal to or greater than three;]

or [(ii) an ultra high temperature (UHT) treatment at not less than 135 °C in combination with a suitable holding time;]]

In this example there is a clear indication that only one option may be certified and the other must be deleted.

No part of a declaration on a veterinary certificate may be deleted unless it is specifically indicated that it is permissible to do so. Any such deletions would make the certificate invalid and result in the rejection of a consignment.

Example

I, the undersigned official veterinarian, declare that I am aware of the relevant provisions of Directive 2002/99/EC and of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and hereby certify that the dairy product described above:

(a) has been obtained from animals:

(i) under the control of the official veterinary service,

(ii) belonging to holdings which were not under restrictions due to foot-and-mouth disease or rinderpest, and,

(iii) subject to regular veterinary inspections to ensure that they satisfy the animal health conditions laid down in Chapter I of Section IX of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and in Directive 2002/99/EC

These statements are fundamental requirements for the importation of dairy products onto the EU and cannot be deleted. Any products that did not fulfil these requirements would be ineligible for export.

9. Completion and signing of certificates

Certificates may be typed or handwritten. Handwritten entries should be completed in block capitals and in coloured ink other than black.

Most official veterinary certificates for trade in foods of animal origin conform to a standard format set out by OIE (see Appendix 1). All certificates for export to the EU follow this format and an example is included in Appendix 3.

The standard format comprises:

Part I – details of consignment

Part II.1 – animal health attestation

Part II.2 – public health attestation

Veterinarian signature

► Consignment details

Guidance on completion is provided with the OIE model certificate in Appendix 2 and an example of a check list for certifying veterinarians is in Appendix 4.

It is essential that identification marks of shipment containers, official seals and the packaging of the consignment are accurately recorded on the certificate to ensure that the physical consignment can be reliably correlated with the certificate at the inspection point on entry to the importing country.

The expected border post at which the consignment will be delivered to the importing country should be recorded. Note that for exports to the EU, only certain ports (designated Border Inspection Posts) are authorised to receive imports from outside the EU.

► Animal and public health attestation

Certifying veterinarians should follow the Principles of Certification and ensure that they receive and keep records of any information from other parties that they rely upon to complete the certificate.

All permissible deletions should be made, including non-applicable conditions; it is not necessary to initial and stamp deletions unless instructions specifically request this. Excessive use of official stamps should be avoided since they may reduce the legibility of the certificate.

► Veterinary signature

All blank spaces on the certificate and areas under completed sections should be ruled off to prevent fraudulent additions to be made.

All sections of the certificate should be completed before signing. Incomplete certificates should never be signed.

The certifying veterinarian should complete the certificate with his/her signature in a colour other than black and the date of signing, print his/her name and qualifications and apply the official stamp. Official stamps should only be used on official veterinary certificates. Further details of methods for stamping certificates in a secure manner are provided in Appendix 4.

10. Electronic certification

Certification by electronic methods may be accepted by some importing countries, although there is currently little uptake of electronic certification in international trade in food.

Certification may be provided by electronic documentation sent directly from the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country to the Veterinary Authority of the importing country. Such systems also normally provide an interface with the commercial organisation marketing the commodity for provision of information to the certifying authority.

Electronic certificates may be in a different format but should carry the same information as conventional paper certificates. The same Principles of Certification should be applied to electronic certification.

The Veterinary Authority should have in place systems for the security of electronic certificates against access by unauthorised persons or organisations.

11. Appendices : Terrestrial Animal Health Code

Appendix 1

Article 5.10.4. : Model veterinary certificate for international trade in products of animal origin

COUNTRY :

Part I: Details of dispatched consignment	I.1. Consignor: Name: Address:		I.2. Certificate reference number:		
			I.3. Veterinary Authority:		
	I.4. Consignee: Name: Address:				
	I.5. Country of origin:		ISO code*	I.6. Zone or compartment of origin**:	
	I.7. Country of destination:		ISO code*	I.8. Zone or compartment of destination**:	
	I.9. Place of origin: Name: Address:				
	I.10. Place of shipment:		I.11. Date of departure:		
	I.12. Means of transport: Aeroplane <input type="checkbox"/> Ship <input type="checkbox"/> Railway wagon <input type="checkbox"/> Road vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Identification:		I.13. Expected border post: I.14. CITES permit No(s). **:		
	I.15. Description of commodity:		I.16. Commodity code (HS code):		
			I.17. Total quantity:		
	I.18. Temperature of product: Ambient <input type="checkbox"/> Chilled <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen <input type="checkbox"/>		I.19. Total number of packages:		
	I.20. Identification of container/seal number:		I.21. Type of packaging:		
	I.22. Commodities intended for use as: Human consumption <input type="checkbox"/> Animal feed <input type="checkbox"/> Further processing <input type="checkbox"/> Technical use <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>				
	I.23.				
I.24. Identification of commodities:					
Species (Scientific name)		Nature of commodity	Treatment type		
		Approval number of establishments			
Number of packages		Net weight	Lot ID/date code		

Appendix 2

CHAPTER 5.10.

MODEL VETERINARY CERTIFICATES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS, HATCHING EGGS AND PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

Article 5.10.1.

Notes for guidance on the veterinary certificates for international trade in live animals, hatching eggs and products of animal origin

1. General

Please complete the certificate on paper in capitals. To confirm an option, mark the box with a cross (X). Ensure that no portion of certificate is left blank in a manner that would allow it to be amended. Non-applicable fields may be crossed out.

2. Part I. Details of dispatched consignment

Country:	Name of the country that issues the certificate.
Box I.1.	Name and full address of the natural or legal person dispatching the consignment. Information on telephone and fax numbers or e-mail address is recommended.
Box I.2.	The certificate reference number is the number used by the Veterinary Authority of the country to identify the certificate.
Box I.3.	Name of the Veterinary Authority.
Box I.4.	Name and full address of the natural or legal person to whom the consignment is destined at the time the certificate is issued.
Box I.5.	Name of the country from which the animals, hatching eggs, embryos, semen, ova or brood combs are being exported. For products, name the country(ies) where the finished products were produced, manufactured or packed. "ISO code" refers to the international standard two-letter code (ISO 3166-1 Alpha-2 Code) for a country produced by the International Organization for Standardization.
Box I.6.	Name of the zone or compartment of origin, if relevant, in part II of the certificate.
Box I.7.	Name of the country of destination. "ISO code" refers to the international standard two-letter code (ISO 3166-1 Alpha-2 Code) for a country produced by the International Organization for Standardization.
Box I.8.	Name of the zone or compartment of destination, if relevant, in part II of the certificate.
Box I.9.	Name and full address of the place(s) from which the animals or products are being exported; and official approval or registration number when required. For animals and hatching eggs: the establishment(s), wildlife or hunting reserves. For semen: the artificial insemination centre. For embryos and ova: the name, address and official approval number of the collection team (not the premises of storage). For products of animal origin: the premises from which the products are to be dispatched.
Box I.10.	Name of the place from which the animals or products are being shipped (this will be a land, sea or airport).
Box I.11.	Date of departure. For animals include the expected time of departure.
Box I.12.	Details of the means of transport. Identification of the means of transport at the time the certificate is issued: for air transport, the flight number; for maritime transport, the name of the vessel; for rail transport, the number of the train and the wagon and for road transport, the registration number of the road vehicle and the number of the trailer where used.

Box I.13.	Name of expected border post and, if available, its UN/LOCODE (refer to the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations).
Box I.14.	CITES permit number(s) if the commodity concerns species listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
Box I.15.	Describe the commodity or use the titles as they appear in the Harmonised System of the World Customs Organization.
Box I.16.	Heading or HS Code of the Harmonized System set up by the World Customs Organization.
Box I.17.	Total quantity of the commodity. For animals, hatching eggs and animal products (semen, ova, embryos) give the total count of animals, eggs or straws. For products give the gross weight and the net weight in kg of the whole consignment.
Box I.18.	Temperature of products for transport and storage.
Box I.19.	Total number of boxes, cages or stalls in which the animals or hatching eggs are being transported. Total number of cryogenic containers for semen, ova, embryos. Total number of packages for products.
Box I.20.	Identify the containers/seal numbers where required.
Box I.21.	Identify the type of packaging of products as defined in Recommendation No. 21 – Code of Passengers, Type of Cargo, Package and Packaging Materials of UN/CEFACT (United Nation Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business).
Box I.22.	Intended use of the imported animals or products. Breeding/rearing: applies to animal for breeding or rearing and hatching eggs. Slaughter: applies to animal for slaughter. Wildlife management: applies to wildlife for the purpose of managing populations. Pet: applies to animals kept for companionship or enjoyment. This excludes livestock species. Exhibition/education: applies to animals exhibited in zoos, circuses or sporting activities or for educational purposes. Human consumption: applies to products intended for human consumption. Animal feed: means any product of animal origin (single or multiple), whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended to be fed to animals. Further processing: applies to products of animal origin which have to be further processed before being suitable for end use. Technical use: applies to products not intended for human or animal consumption. These include animal products that are intended for use in the pharmaceutical, medical, cosmetic and other industries. Such products may be subjected to extensive further processing. Other: intended for purposes not listed elsewhere in this classification.
Box I.23.	Mark, if appropriate.
Box I.24.	Details on the nature of the commodity sufficient to identify it. For animals and hatching eggs: Species (scientific name); Identification system; Identification number or other identification details; Quantity and if required, Breed / Category (e.g. heifer, steer, layer, broiler); Age; Sex. For animals holding an official passport, the international animal passport number should be provided, and a copy of the details on the passport attached to the certificate. For embryos, ova and semen: Species (Scientific name); Identification mark according to the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS) or the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR); Collection date; Approval number of the centre/team; Identification of the donor animal; Quantity. If required, Breed. For bees and brood combs: Category means hive with bees, swarm, consignment of bees (worker bees, drones), queen bees, brood-combs, royal cells, etc. Identification details include peculiarities (e.g. Marks or age or weight or surface). Breed / Variety if required. For products of animal origin: Species (Scientific name); Nature of commodity; Treatment type; approval number of establishment(s) (e.g. abattoir; cutting plant; processing plant; cold store); Lot identification/date code; Quantity; Number of packages; Net weight.

3. Part II. Zoosanitary information

Box II.	Complete this part in accordance with the requirements agreed between the Veterinary Authorities of the importing and exporting countries in accordance with the recommendations in the Terrestrial Code.
Box II.a.	Reference number: see box I.2.
Official veterinarian	Name, address, official position, date of signature and official stamp of the Veterinary Services.

Appendix 3

Model animal and public health certificate for certain meat products and treated stomachs, bladders and intestines intended for consignment to the European Union from third countries

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▼B

COUNTRY		Meat products/treated stomachs, bladders and intestines for import	
		II.a. Certificate reference number	II.b.
Part II: Certification	II.1. Animal Health Attestation:		
	I, the undersigned official veterinarian certify that:		
	II.1.1. The meat product, treated stomachs, bladders and intestines ⁽¹⁾ contains the following meat constituents and meet the criteria indicated below:		
	Species (A)	Treatment (B)	Origin (C)
	<p>(A) Insert the code for the relevant species of meat product, treated stomachs, bladders and intestines where BOV = domestic bovine animals (<i>Bos taurus</i>, <i>Bison bison</i>, <i>Bubalus bubalis</i> and their crossbreeds), OVI = domestic sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>) and goats (<i>Capra hircus</i>), ECI = domestic equine animals (<i>Equus caballus</i>, <i>Equus asinus</i> and their crossbreeds), POR = domestic porcine animals (<i>Sus scrofa</i>), RAB = domestic rabbits, PFG = domestic poultry and farmed feathered game, RUF farmed non-domestic animals other than suidae and solipeds; RUW = wild non-domestic animals other than suidae and solipeds; SUW = wild non-domestic suidae; EQW = wild non-domestic solipeds; WLP = wild lagomorphs, WGB = wild game birds.</p> <p>(B) Insert A, B, C, D, E or F for the required treatment as specified and defined in Parts 2, 3 and 4 of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC.</p> <p>(C) Insert the ISO code of the country of origin and, in the case of regionalization by Community legislation for the relevant meat constituents, the region as indicated in Part 1 of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC (as last amended).</p> <p>⁽²⁾ II.1.2. The meat product, treated stomachs, bladders and intestines described in point II.1.1 has been prepared from fresh meat from domestic bovine animals (<i>Bos taurus</i>, <i>Bison bison</i>, <i>Bubalus bubalis</i> and their crossbreeds); domestic sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>) and goats (<i>Capra hircus</i>); domestic equine animals (<i>Equus caballus</i>, <i>Equus asinus</i> and their crossbreeds); domestic porcine animals (<i>Sus scrofa</i>); farmed non-domestic animals other than suidae and solipeds; wild non-domestic animals other than suidae and solipeds; wild non-domestic suidae; wild non-domestic solipeds and the fresh meat used in the production of the meat products:</p> <p>^{either} [II.1.2.1. has undergone a non-specific treatment as specified and defined under point A in Part 4 of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC] and: ⁽²⁾</p> <p>^{either} [II.1.2.1.1. satisfies the relevant animal and public health requirements laid down in the appropriate health certificate(s) in Annex II, Part 2, to Council Decision 79/542/EEC and originates in a third country, or part thereof in the case of regionalization under Community legislation, as described in the relevant column of part 2 of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC] ⁽²⁾</p> <p>or [II.1.2.1.1. originates in a Member State of the European Community] ⁽²⁾</p> <p>or [II.1.2.1. meets any requirements agreed under Directive 2002/93/EC, is derived from animals coming from a holding not subject to restrictions for the specific diseases mentioned in the appropriate health certificate(s) in Annex II, Part 2, to Council Decision 79/542/EEC and within a 10 km radius of which no outbreaks of such diseases have occurred in the last 30 days and has undergone the specific treatment laid down for the third country of origin or part thereof for the meat of the species concerned in Parts 2 or 3 (as appropriate) of Annex II to Commission Decision 2007/777/EC] ⁽²⁾</p> <p>⁽²⁾ II.1.3. The meat product, treated stomachs, bladders and intestines described under point II.1.1 has been prepared from fresh meat of domestic poultry, including farmed or wild game birds, that:</p> <p>^{either} [II.1.3.1. has undergone a non-specific treatment as specified and defined under point A in Part 4 of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC] and: ⁽²⁾</p> <p>^{either} [II.1.3.1.1. satisfies the animal health requirements laid down in Commission Decision 2006/696/EC.] ⁽²⁾</p> <p>or [II.1.3.1.1. originates in a Member State of the European Community satisfying the requirements of Article 3 of Council Directive 2002/93/EC] ⁽²⁾</p> <p>or [II.1.3.1. originates in a third country referred to in Annex II part 1 to Decision 2006/696/EC, comes from a holding not subject to restrictions for Avian Influenza or Newcastle disease within a 10 km radius of which no outbreaks of such diseases have occurred in the last 30 days and has undergone the specific treatment laid down for the third country of origin or part thereof for the meat of the species concerned in Parts 2 or 3 (as appropriate) of Annex II to Decision 2007/777/EC.] ⁽²⁾</p>		

▼B

COUNTRY	Meat products/treated stomachs, bladders and intestines for import							
	II.a. Certificate reference number	II.b.						
<p>Part II:</p> <p>(¹) Meat products as laid down in point 7.1 of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and treated stomachs, bladders and intestines that have undergone one of the treatments laid down in Annex II part 4 to Decision 2007/777/EC.</p> <p>(²) Keep as appropriate.</p> <p>(³) By way of derogation from point 4, carcasses, half carcasses or half carcasses cut into no more than three wholesale cuts, and quarters containing no specified risk material other than the vertebral column, including dorsal root ganglia, may be imported.</p> <p>When removal of the vertebral column is not required, carcasses or wholesale cuts of carcasses of bovine animals containing vertebral column, shall be identified by a blue stripe on the label referred to in Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000.</p> <p>The number of bovine carcasses or wholesale cuts of carcasses, from which removal of the vertebral column is required as well as the number where removal of the vertebral column is not required shall be added to the document referred to in Article 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 136/2004 in case of imports.</p> <p>(⁴) Only applicable to imports of treated intestines.</p> <p>(⁵) By way of derogation from point 3, carcasses, half carcasses or half carcasses cut into no more than three wholesale cuts, and quarters containing no specified risk material other than the vertebral column, including dorsal root ganglia, may be imported.</p> <p>When removal of the vertebral column is not required, carcasses or wholesale cuts of carcasses of bovine animals containing vertebral column, shall be identified by a clearly visible blue stripe on the label referred to in Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000.</p> <p>Specific information on the number of bovine carcasses or wholesale cuts of carcasses, from which removal of the vertebral column is required and from which removal of the vertebral column is not required shall be added to the document referred to in Article 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 136/2004 in case of imports.</p> <p>— The colour of the signature shall be different to that of the printing. The same rule applies to the stamp other than those embossed or watermarked.</p>								
<p>Official veterinarian</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Name (in capital letters):</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Qualification and title:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>Signature:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stamp:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Name (in capital letters):	Qualification and title:	Date:	Signature:	Stamp:	
Name (in capital letters):	Qualification and title:							
Date:	Signature:							
Stamp:								

Appendix 4

Checklist for Completion of Official Export Certification²:

- Have you completed all parts of the certificate in accordance with the 12 Principles of Certification?
- Have you read and complied with the Notes for Guidance for the certificate?
- Is the notifiable disease clearance (where applicable) still valid?
- Are all entries clearly legible; preferably typewritten or in block capitals?
- Are all “delete as applicable” deletions made?
- Are manuscript entries, the signature and official stamp in a colour other than black?
- Are all blank spaces which could be used fraudulently ruled off?
- Are all corrections endorsed with your initials and official stamp, applied so that text is not obscured?
- Are any associated documents or schedules correctly identified and attached to the certificate securely and “fan stamped”?
- Are you confident that there is no conflict of interest which prevents you from signing this certificate?
- Have you signed, dated, stamped and added your name and qualifications in block capitals?

Additional reminders for Official Veterinarians carrying out official export certification:

All certificates to be signed by an Official Veterinarian (OV) must be official Defra documents, serially numbered and recorded by the issuing Animal Health office.

OVs must not use their Official Veterinarian stamp on non Defra documents.

² <http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/official-vets/guidance/exportchecklist.html>

All blank certificates should be held in secure conditions.

All parts of a certificate must be completed; do not sign certificates which are incomplete.

All permissible deletions (ie delete as applicable) must be made before the certificate is signed. **Deletions of options or alternatives**, including non-applicable conditions on EU certificates (ITAHCs), **do not need to be initialled and stamped**, unless instructions on or with the certificate specifically ask for this.

The conditions on the certificate must not be altered unless an official derogation has been issued to the OV authorising a specific amendment.

Any corrections or officially authorised amendments must be made by crossing out the incorrect entry and inserting the correct entry; correction fluid must not be used. All corrections or authorised amendments must be endorsed with the initials and official stamp of the OV.

OVs should avoid having to make corrections, by ensuring all details are checked before entering them on the certificate.

If mistakes are made which need correcting, it may well be more appropriate, if time allows, to start again with a new certificate depending on the nature and number of the corrections needed. Multiple corrections, even if correctly endorsed, are likely to arouse suspicion of tampering.

Additional initialling and stamping beyond that which is necessary should be avoided; it may be counter-productive as some destination countries may suspect that certificates bearing an untidy mass of additional stamps have been tampered with.

Before signing the certificate, the OV must ensure that any necessary support certificates, declarations, records or other documents have been obtained and checked. Copies of these documents should be retained by the certifying veterinarian.

Schedules - When there is insufficient space to list all required information in a section of a certificate, a separate schedule may be used. Each page of the schedule should be headed "Schedule to certificate number XXXXXXX" and have a page number. If, after the schedule is drawn up, any details are amended or deleted by the certifying OV, the alteration must be initialled and stamped to show that this is an authorised change to the schedule. The certifying officer must draw a line under the last entry on each page and sign, date and affix the OV stamp on that line in order to prevent the unauthorised addition of more entries. Any blank space under the line should be ruled off. "See attached schedule" should be entered in the relevant part of the certificate.

Fan Stamping - Any additional documents associated with a certificate e.g. schedules or supplementary certificates should be stapled and "fan stamped" together to make a tamper proof composite document. The pages of the certificate and associated documents should be "fanned" to overlap each page by approximately 2cm at the foot and the overlying edges stamped several times with the OV stamp in a colour other than black to authenticate each page. Alternatively, the bottom right hand corners of the pages can be folded over progressively to create overlapping edges which are then stamped. The top left corner of the documents should be folded down, then stapled and the OV stamp applied over the join.

Copies - OVs should retain copies of export certificates for a minimum of one year, and return a copy to the issuing Animal Health office within 7 days of signing (for Third Country certificates) or on the day of signing (for EU certificates). Copies should be endorsed with "Certified Copy" and the OV's initials or signature at the top of the front page.



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