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Food, Plants, Animals and Related Products

Memorandum D19-1-1

ISSN 2369-2391

Ottawa, January 24, 2019

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In Brief

1. Updated to reflect the Safe Food for Canadians Act (SFCA) and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) coming into force.
2. Minor editorial changes.

This memorandum contains the guidelines that apply to commercial and non-commercial importations of food, plants, animals (FPA) and related products as regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) including:

- Animal feed
- Animal and plant pathogens, including microorganisms and biological material
- Fertilizers, fertilizer-pesticide combination products, soil supplements and growing media
- Fish, seafood and fish products
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Grains, seeds, and nuts
- Live animals including:
 - terrestrial animals
 - aquatic animals (including gametes and germplasm)
 - animal semen and embryos
 - hatching eggs
 - honey bees
- Pet food and treats
- Plants and plant products
- Processed fruits and vegetables, and maple products
- Products and by-products of animal origin including:
 - meat and meat products, including glands and organs (edible and inedible)
 - eggs and egg products

- milk and milk products
- honey, beeswax and propolis
- hides, skins, feathers, wool and trophies
- manure
- rendered animal meals and rendered animal fats
- animal carcasses, parts and derivatives
- aquatic animal carcasses, parts of carcasses and offal
- animal samples (tissues, blood, feces, etc.)
- Roots, bulbs and tubers and other plant matter for propagation
- Soil and related matter
- Wood and wood products

This memorandum also applies to items that are infested or contaminated with CFIA-regulated matter, such as soil, pests, blood, feces and organic tissue.

The importation or exportation of FPA and related products may also be regulated by other government departments such as Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Global Affairs Canada. Information on these requirements is not included in this memorandum, but can be found in the following CBSA memoranda:

Environment and Climate Change Canada: [Memorandum D19-7-1, Interpretation of the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act \(WAPPRIITA\) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#).

Fisheries and Oceans Canada: [Memorandum D19-8-5, Import Prohibitions and Requirements for Commercial Importers of Aquatic Species and for Travellers under the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations](#).

Global Affairs Canada: [Memorandum D19-10-2, Export and Import Permits Act \(Importations\)](#) and [Memorandum D10-18-1, Tariff Rate Quotas](#).

In addition, although the importation of human pathogens is not regulated by the CFIA, there are pathogens that are both human and animal (zoonotic) and these are regulated by both the CFIA and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). PHAC is responsible for the administration of certain provisions of the Health of Animals Act and Health of Animals Regulations. It issues import permits and transfer authorizations for most terrestrial animal pathogens (excluding aquatic animals, bees, invertebrates and pathogens that cause emerging or foreign animal diseases). For more information consult the [PHAC Laboratory Safety and Biosecurity website](#).

Legislation

The requirements outlined in this memorandum are derived from the following Acts of Parliament and their associated Regulations:

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Legislation

- [Canada Border Services Agency Act](#)
- [Customs Act](#)

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Legislation

- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act](#)
- [Feeds Act](#)
- [Fertilizers Act](#)
- [Health of Animals Act](#)
- [Meat Inspection Act](#)
- [Plant Protection Act](#)
- [Safe Food for Canadians Act](#)
- [Seeds Act](#)

Guidelines and General Information

Responsibilities of the CBSA and the CFIA

1. The CFIA is responsible for establishing the policies that govern the import, export and in-transit movement of FPA and related products.
2. In 2003, the CBSA assumed responsibility for the initial import inspection services in respect of the acts and regulations administered by the CFIA to the extent that they are applicable at Canadian border points. The CFIA retains responsibility for the enforcement of the CFIA acts and regulations to the extent that they apply within Canada and at its National Import Service Centre (NISC).
3. In 2005, the CBSA and the CFIA signed an umbrella memorandum of understanding (MOU), which outlines the administrative and operational roles and responsibilities of the two agencies as they apply at the border with respect to the import, export and in-transit movement of FPA and related products.
4. CBSA officers are designated to enforce the provisions of the above CFIA acts and their associated regulations under section 9 (2) (b) of the [Canada Border Services Agency Act](#).

CFIA Import Requirements

5. FPA and related products brought into Canada can carry harmful animal and plant diseases, plant pests, microorganisms, viruses, fungi and/or bacteria or may be invasive species, which can pose serious risks to Canada's environment, economy, agricultural sector, natural resources, and the health of Canadians.

6. In order to help mitigate the risks of introducing threats into Canada, the CFIA has established prohibitions, restrictions, controls, and/or limits on the importation of FPA and related products from around the world. In some cases, import documentation such as licences, permits, certificates and/or other documents or information are required in order for the goods to be eligible to enter Canada.

7. Any required licences, permits, certificates and any other required import documentation must be obtained prior to arrival of the goods in Canada.

8. All required import documentation must be authentic, legible, complete, and, where required, signed by the appropriate authority.

9. Complete and current import requirements for CFIA-regulated products can be found by consulting the CFIA's Automated Import Reference System (AIRS). AIRS is an automated reference tool that uses a question and answer approach to guide the user through a series of questions about the Harmonized System (HS) codes, product description, genus or species, origin, destination, end use and miscellaneous qualifiers of the product they wish to import. Please be aware that import requirements can change on a daily basis due to emerging threats.

Additional information on using AIRS can be found in Appendix A of this memorandum.

10. Clients wishing to receive email notifications regarding updates to CFIA import policies and AIRS, including system outages, can do so by subscribing through the CFIA's website.

11. CFIA import permits can be requested by completing the appropriate permit application form(s) available on the CFIA's website. The CFIA's Centre for Administration (CoA) can also be contacted for further assistance with obtaining these permits.

Centre of Administration

E-mail: Permission@inspection.gc.ca

Telephone: 1-855-212-7695 or 613-773-5131

12. In order to respond to emerging situations (e.g. disease outbreaks), the CFIA may impose new requirements or restrictions on FPA and related products entering Canada that supersede the instructions in AIRS. The CBSA will enforce these new restrictions/requirements as required at Canadian border points of entry.

CFIA's National Import Service Centre (NISC)

13. To simplify and enhance the import process, the CFIA established the NISC as a single-point contact for information and advice concerning CFIA import requirements. Clients seeking information or assistance related to CFIA import requirements or restrictions can contact the CFIA's NISC at:

National Import Service Centre

Telephone and EDI: 1-800-835-4486 (Canada or U.S.A.)

1-289-247-4099 (local calls and all other countries)

Fax: 1-613-773-9999

07:00 a.m. to 03:00 a.m. (Eastern Time)

Mailing address:

1050 Courtney Park Drive East,
Mississauga, ON L5T 2R4

14. The CFIA's NISC is responsible for reviewing import documentation for certain FPA and related goods entering Canada and then returning a release recommendation either electronically to the CBSA or by fax directly to the client on a CFIA 5272, Request for Documentation Review form.

Traveller importations

15. Travellers are required by law to declare any FPA and related products that they are bringing into Canada. Failure to declare goods can result in forfeiture, monetary penalties, and/or prosecution. The Agriculture and Agri-food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act is used to address traveller non-compliance when a person fails to present FPA goods, fails to present prescribed documentation for FPA goods upon entry into Canada or attempts to illegally import FPA goods. See paragraph 72 of this memorandum for further information on monetary penalties.

16. Travellers are also responsible for ensuring that their goods comply with the requirements of all government departments and agencies prior to importation of the goods into Canada, including obtaining any required import documentation prior to arrival of the goods at the border.

17. Travellers can consult the CFIA's website Travellers: what you can bring into Canada.

18. Complete and current CFIA import requirements can be found by consulting the CFIA's AIRS. **Please be advised that the import requirements can change on a daily basis due to emerging threats.**

Additional information on using AIRS can be found in Appendix A of this memorandum.

Commercial importations

19. Importers or the person in possession, or care and control of the goods are responsible for ensuring that their goods comply with the requirements of all government departments and agencies prior to importation into Canada.

20. All commercial importations must be reported to the CBSA at the first point of arrival in Canada in accordance with CBSA D3-series memoranda. Release from CBSA control can be obtained by following the release and accounting procedures outlined in CBSA D17-series memoranda.

21. Under certain conditions, as described in CBSA D3-series memoranda, shipments may be allowed to move inland, in-bond, where formal release procedures will be followed and compliance with the requirements of other government departments verified.

22. For every shipment of goods requiring documentation review by the CFIA's NISC, a completed CFIA 5272, Request for Documentation Review form along with any CFIA-required import documentation must be submitted to the NISC for review. A customs transaction number is mandatory for all import requests and must appear on the CFIA 5272 form.

Note: The requirement to submit a CFIA 5272 form to the CFIA will not always be necessary when transmitting an Integrated Import Declaration (IID) release request under the CBSA's Single Window Initiative (see paragraphs 27 to 30). Please consult AIRS to determine CFIA 5272 submission requirements.

23. For Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transmissions, importers/brokers and the CBSA will receive an electronic notification of the CFIA's recommendation via the CBSA's Accelerated Commercial Release Operations Support System (ACROSS).

24. For paper submissions, or EDI submissions requiring accompanying documentation, the 5272 form will be stamped and returned by the NISC to inform importers/brokers of the CFIA's recommendation. The stamped 5272 along with all CFIA required import documentation must be presented to the CBSA as a part of the release package.

25. All documentation submitted to the CBSA must be true, accurate and complete, and may require taxonomic names to be provided (e.g. for aquatic animals). Importers and brokers are advised that incomplete or missing documentation may result in delays, refusal and/or administrative monetary penalties (see paragraph 73).

Note: For plants, animals, and microorganisms, instructions for completing the commodity description field on the commercial invoice are found in Appendix A of Memorandum D1-4-1, CBSA Invoice Requirements.

26. Where applicable, commercial and traveller importations must also meet the CFIA's labelling requirements. The CFIA regulates packaging, labelling, composition, and net quantity requirements for most foods under the following Acts and their associated regulations:

- Safe Food for Canadians Act
- Food and Drugs Act (as it relates to food)
- Health of Animals Act

The CBSA assists the CFIA with the administration of these Acts, through the detection and notification of possible infractions.

Implementation of the CBSA Single Window Initiative (SWI)

27. The CBSA has implemented the Single Window EDI service option – the Integrated Import Declaration (IID) as the primary method of obtaining commercial release of CFIA-regulated goods.

28. SWI's IID allows for the provision of licence, certificate, permit and other import documentation information submitted via the Digital Image Functionality and/or as dematerialized information.

29. All CFIA programs are covered in Appendix B1 of the CBSA's Electronic Commerce Client Requirements Document (ECCRD) for the IID service option 911.

30. For more information on the SWI IID, please refer to the CBSA's SWI website. The ECCRD provides technical and system requirements information. Appendix B of the ECCRD includes a list of required data elements for all Participating Government Agencies (PGAs).

In-transit Shipments

31. For the purposes of this memorandum, "in-transit" is defined as the movement of foreign goods through Canadian territory from a point outside Canada to another foreign point.

32. The CBSA may authorize the in-transit movement of CFIA-regulated commodities under the following conditions:

- (a) CBSA reporting requirements have been met as outlined in CBSA D3-series memoranda; and
- (b) the goods meet all CFIA requirements; and
- (c) the goods are transported by a CBSA-bonded carrier.

33. CFIA requirements for in-transit shipments can be determined by consulting AIRS under the "in-transit through Canada" option(s). Where this option is not available, the shipment must meet CFIA import requirements as listed in AIRS.

Canadian goods returning to Canada

34. CFIA-regulated goods returning to Canada after being imported to another country must meet all CFIA requirements.

35. CFIA requirements for Canadian goods returning to Canada can be determined by consulting AIRS under the "Canadian goods returning to Canada" option. Where this option is not available, the goods must meet CFIA import requirements as listed in AIRS.

Inadmissible Goods

36. Goods that have been imported in contravention of CFIA legislation will either be:

- (a) seized and deemed forfeit to the Crown, or
- (b) ordered removed from Canada.
- (c) the importer or the person in possession, or care and control of the goods may abandon the goods to the Crown in accordance with section 36 of the Customs Act.

37. Where an importer or the person in possession, care and control of the goods fails to remove goods that have been ordered removed from Canada within the specified time period, the goods become forfeit to the crown.

38. Seized, abandoned or forfeited goods will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation that controls, regulates or prohibits the importation of the commodity.

39. Importers or the person in possession, or care and control of the goods are responsible for all costs associated with the removal, treatment, storage and/or disposal of seized, abandoned or forfeited goods under CFIA legislation or the Customs Act.

40. Goods that are abandoned or forfeited to another government department remain the responsibility of that department.

Wood Packaging Material (WPM)

41. Wood packaging material (WPM) is defined as wood or wood products used in supporting, protecting or carrying a commodity, and includes dunnage. All ship borne dunnage within a container, on a flat-rack etc. that is not bracing cargo on the ship's deck is considered WPM.

42. The CFIA regulates the entry of WPM into Canada in accordance with the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures 'Regulation of Wood Packaging Material in International Trade' 2009 (ISPM 15) as endorsed by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

43. WPM from all countries, except the continental United States (U.S.), entering Canada must meet the following CFIA import requirements:

(a) In all instances the WPM must be free from live wood-boring pests and signs of live wood-boring pests;

AND EITHER

(b) The WPM must bear a valid IPPC mark that:

- i. is legible, permanent, non-transferrable and conforms to the standards set out in Annex II of ISPM15.
- ii. indicates the two-letter country code for the country in which the wood packaging material was produced;
- iii. indicates the official certification number issued to the facility producing the compliant wood packaging material;
- iv. indicates the two-letter code for the treatment carried out, indicating treatment by an approved method.

OR

(c) The WPM must be accompanied by a valid phytosanitary certificate indicating treatment by an approved method.

Note: Phytosanitary certificates are not accepted from China, but are still acceptable from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

44. Any WPM found to be non-compliant with the CFIA entry requirements is inadmissible to Canada and will be ordered removed from Canada.

45. Under certain, limited conditions, shipments containing a minor amount of non-compliant WPM may either: (a) be deconsolidated, or (b) have the non-compliant WPM separated from the associated cargo and replaced with compliant WPM. Once the non-compliant WPM is removed and arrangements have been made for its disposal in accordance with CFIA regulations, the shipment will be eligible for release into Canada, providing the shipment also meets all other Canadian import requirements.

46. The option to deconsolidate or separate is only available at the discretion of the CBSA port of entry and is contingent upon the nature of the non-compliance and the capacity of the port of entry facilities to handle deconsolidation or separation. **Deconsolidation or separation is never an option when there are live wood-boring pests or signs of live wood-boring pests.**

47. Any WPM found with live wood-boring pests or signs of live wood-boring pests will be contained and sealed to prevent the risk of pest escape, ordered treated and removed from Canada. Treatment is only to prevent the risk of pest escape while awaiting and during removal from Canada, and does not render the shipment compliant with ISPM 15 or CFIA entry requirements for WPM.

48. Ship borne dunnage, which is wood carried on a marine vessel and used to secure or support a commodity but which does not remain with the commodity, is currently inadmissible to Canada, regardless of any ISPM 15 markings, treatment or certificates. All ship borne dunnage must either:

(a) remain secured on the marine vessel so that pests may not escape while in Canadian waters.

OR

(b) be stored in sealed containers that prevent the escape of pests and transported for disposal or processing at a CFIA-approved disposal or processing facility, subject to CBSA approval and where CFIA-approved facilities exist.

49. All costs associated with the storage, separation, treatment, removal, and/or disposal of non-compliant WPM or dunnage are the responsibility of the importer or person in possession, or care and control of the goods pursuant to section 44 of the Plant Protection Act.

50. For current, detailed information on the entry requirements for WPM, IPPC marks, Phytosanitary certificates, and dunnage, and to ensure compliance, always refer to CFIA Directive D-98-08 - Entry Requirements for Wood Packaging Material into Canada.

Goods Contaminated with Soil

51. Canada has a "no tolerance" policy for foreign soil, and therefore anything more than a fine film of dust left by dirty wash water or accumulated during transport is considered to be contamination with soil. Any visible film, patch or clump of mud, dirt or organic matter (e.g., manure or blood) on or

in the goods or conveyance beyond a fine film of dust constitutes the presence of soil and renders the goods/conveyance non-compliant.

52. Any goods found to be contaminated with soil are inadmissible and will be ordered removed from Canada. This includes non-FPA products such as used vehicles, farm equipment, conveyances, and personal effects such as hiking boots, gardening tools and bicycles.

53. Under exceptional circumstances, the CBSA may authorize treatment of the goods or conveyance at a CFIA-approved cleaning facility, bonded under the Customs Act. The goods must then be re-inspected by the CBSA before being authorized to enter Canada. The decision to allow the goods or conveyance to be treated is at the discretion of the border services officer and is based on a combination of the following factors:

- Amount of soil present (level of contamination);
- Availability of either a CFIA-approved treatment facility within the immediate urban environment or mobile treatment facility to come to the port of entry;
- Ease of containment and transport;
- Operational capacity of the port of entry;
- Shape, surface and texture of goods; and
- Health and safety concerns.

54. All costs associated with the storage, treatment and/or removal of goods contaminated with soil are the responsibility of importer or person in possession, or care and control of the goods pursuant to section 44 of the Plant Protection Act and section 60 of the Health of Animals Act.

55. For further information on CFIA import requirements for goods contaminated with soil, please refer to CFIA Directive D-95-26 - Phytosanitary requirements for soil and soil-related matter, and for items contaminated with soil and soil-related matter.

Live Animals

56. Live animals that require an inspection by a CFIA veterinarian or the CBSA are inspected **at the first point of arrival in Canada**. Live Animals requiring CFIA veterinary inspection at the border are indicated in AIRS as "Refer to CFIA – Veterinary Inspection". Those requiring CBSA inspection are identified in AIRS as "CBSA Inspection".

57. Where CFIA veterinary inspection is indicated as a requirement, travellers/importers are to contact the CFIA Animal Health Office closest to the port of entry into Canada prior to arrival to arrange for a veterinary inspection appointment. The results from the CFIA inspection must be made available to the CBSA before the animals can be released into Canada.

58. Live animals imported into Canada must be handled and transported in a humane manner that prevents injury and unnecessary suffering. Any suspected humane transport issues or instances where the animal appears to be downed, injured, sick or unhealthy will be referred to a CFIA veterinarian. Information on the requirements for the humane transport of animals can be found in the Health of Animals Regulations.

59. All costs associated with the storage, removal, and/or disposal of non-compliant live animals are the responsibility of the importer or person in possession, or care and control of the goods.

Empty conveyances entering Canada after transporting live terrestrial animals

60. Empty conveyances entering Canada after transporting live terrestrial animals in a foreign country must have been cleaned in accordance with the Health of Animals Regulations. Non-compliant conveyances will be refused entry into Canada.

Aquatic Animals (live or dead)

61. Traveller/commercial imports of susceptible species listed in Schedule III of the Health of Animals Regulations generally require a CFIA import permit and other documentation as outlined in AIRS in order to enter Canada.

62. Under the Health of Animals Regulations there are additional information requirements that must be declared upon entry, including the scientific or taxonomic names for finfish, crustaceans, and molluscs. Consequently, travellers and commercial importers must report scientific names of all imported aquatic species in the commodity description field of Form CI1, Canada Customs Invoice or the commercial invoice, either electronic or paper, as per the instructions in Memorandum D1-4-1, CBSA Invoice Requirements, and/or in accordance with the technical requirements, specifications and procedures for electronic data interchange as set out in the Electronic Commerce Client Requirements Document (ECCRD). In addition to taxonomic names, travellers and commercial importers must declare the number of aquatic animals being imported, the life stage, the country in which the aquatic animal was born or where the germplasm came from, and whether the animals are from captivity or the wild.

63. The following websites are sources of scientific names and information on aquatic species:

- (a) Fish Base;
- (b) Mollusca Base;
- (c) World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS); and
- (d) Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS).

International Waste

64. International waste may only be offloaded in Canada with the approval of the CBSA and where CFIA-approved routes and CFIA-approved disposal facilities exist.

65. Any international waste offloaded from aircraft or marine vessels must be controlled, transported and disposed of in accordance with the CFIA's International Waste Directive. Marine vessel/aircraft owners or their agents/representatives are responsible for ensuring the requirements of the International Waste Directive are met.

66. For more information on CFIA policies governing the control, transportation and disposal of international waste, please consult the CFIA's [International Waste Directive](#).

Postal and Courier Importations

67. CFIA-regulated commodities are not eligible for import in the Courier Low Value Shipment (LVS) stream. All CFIA import requirements must be met if imported through the postal stream.

68. Additional information on postal and courier importations can be found in [Memorandum D5-1-1, Canada Border Services Agency International Mail Processing System](#), [Memorandum D8-2-16, Courier Imports Remission](#) and [Memorandum D17-4-0, Courier Low Value Shipment Program](#).

Diplomatic Goods and Persons with Special Status

69. All importations of FPA and related products are subject to CFIA import requirements, regardless of any diplomatic immunity, status or privilege extended to the person importing the goods.

70. For additional information refer to [Memorandum D21-1-1, Customs Privileges for Diplomatic Missions, Consular Posts, and International Organizations \(Tariff Item No. 9808.00.00\)](#).

Trade Fairs, Shows and Special Events in Canada

71. FPA and related products imported for trade fairs, shows, or other special events in Canada are subject to all CFIA requirements.

Note: In some cases, AIRS has an end use for "show or exhibition" that can be used to determine CFIA import requirements for these goods.

Penalty Provisions

72. The CBSA has the authority under the [Agriculture and Agri-food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act](#) to issue warnings or monetary penalties to travellers who fail to declare or illegally import FPA goods. Monetary penalties currently range from \$500 to \$1,300 per violation.

73. Under the CBSA's Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS), the CBSA can issue monetary penalties to commercial clients for non-compliance with the CBSA's trade and border legislation. If prescribed documentation has not been presented to the CBSA with the release request, a penalty may be issued by the CBSA for not providing required permits or information before the goods are released. Please refer to [Memorandum D22-1-1, Administrative Monetary Penalty System](#) for details.

Inspection fees

74. The CFIA has established a series of inspection fees related to the importation of certain commodities. These fees are established in the [CFIA Fees Notice](#) under the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act](#).

75. The CBSA collects fees for FPA inspections performed at the border by CBSA officers, which include but are not limited to:

- (a) The inspection of WPM;
- (b) The inspection of goods potentially contaminated with soil;
- (c) The inspection of dogs, cats, horses, feeder cattle, hatching eggs, animal semen and embryos; and
- (d) International waste monitoring activities.

Note: The CFIA may also charge inspection fees separately from the CBSA for services that the CFIA provides.

76. Information on inspection fees and their amounts can be found by consulting the CBSA's [Schedule of Inspection Fees](#) or the CFIA's [Fees Notice](#).

77. The goods and services tax (GST) and other applicable taxes may be charged on these services. The fees cannot be claimed under a traveller's personal exemption.

Additional Information

Exports

78. The CFIA is responsible for the certification and control of FPA and related products exported from Canada. Information on exporting CFIA-regulated commodities can be found on the [CFIA's website](#). The CBSA's export reporting requirements are outlined in [Memorandum D20-1-1, Exporter Reporting](#).

Provincial/Territorial Requirements

79. CBSA is not responsible for enforcing provincial or territorial legislation for the importation of plants and animals. Nevertheless, border services officers may contact the appropriate provincial or territorial authority if they suspect that an importation of a plant or animal is in violation of a provincial or territorial law. This includes the importation of any invasive animal or plant species and/or species potentially carrying animal or plant diseases or pests that are regulated by the provinces and territories.

80. Border services officers are granted the authority to share information with the provinces and territories related to potential violations of their laws under paragraphs 107 (4)(e) and 107 (5)(d) of the [Customs Act](#).

Contact Information

81. Any questions concerning this memorandum should be directed to the CBSA's Border Information Service (BIS):

Calls within Canada (toll free):	1-800-461-9999
Calls outside Canada: (long distance charges apply)	1-204-983-3500 1-506-636-5064
Tele-typewriter: (For those with hearing or speech impairments)	1-866-335-3237
Email:	contact@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

Appendix A – CFIA's Automated Import Reference System (AIRS)

The purpose of the CFIA's Automated Import Reference System (AIRS) is to provide accurate and timely information on import requirements. The application uses a question and answer approach to guide the user through a series of questions about the Harmonized System (HS) codes, product description, genus or species, origin, destination, end use and miscellaneous qualifiers of the product they wish to import.

In all cases, the commodities must also meet all other CBSA and other government department (OGD) entry requirements in order to be released into Canada.

When using AIRS to search for a particular commodity, one or more of the following search criteria can be used:

- Common Name
- HS Description
- HS Code
- Alternate Description
- Key Words (includes taxonomic names (scientific names of species) and taxonomic serial numbers (TSN))

As a reference, below are terms used in AIRS under "Recommendations to CBSA/Documentation and Registration Requirements." The terms, as they appear in AIRS, are listed below in bold and are followed by a brief explanation of their meaning.

(a) **Approved:** The commodity is eligible for import into Canada provided that the requirements stated under the conditions of import have been met.

(b) **Approved (must be accompanied by the following documents/registrations):** The commodity is eligible for import into Canada provided that the importer has the required

documentation as listed in AIRS and it is available for CBSA or CFIA review.

(c) **CBSA Inspection:** The commodity is eligible for import into Canada provided that an inspection by a border services officer confirms that all import conditions have been met.

(d) **CBSA Inspection (must be accompanied by the following documents/registrations):** The commodity and the required documentation, as listed in AIRS, require an inspection by a border services officer at the first point of arrival in Canada.

(e) **Not regulated by CFIA:** The commodity is not subject to CFIA regulations.

(f) **Refer to CFIA – NISC:** The required documentation, as listed in AIRS, must be submitted to the CFIA's NISC for review. Documents may be submitted to the NISC for review using the following methods:

i. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) as part of an electronic release request to the CBSA. The NISC will then return a recommendation via the agencies' EDI system;

OR

ii. In advance by fax with a CFIA 5272, Request for Documentation Review (PDF version) form. The CFIA will return a recommendation by stamp on the CFIA 5272 form. All required import documentation including the stamped CFIA 5272 form must then be presented to the CBSA as part of the release package or traveller entry.

(g) **Refer to CFIA – Veterinary Inspection:** The commodity and the required documentation, as listed in AIRS, require inspection by a CFIA veterinarian at the first point of arrival in Canada. The results from the CFIA inspection must be made available to the CBSA before the commodity can be released into Canada.

(h) **Refuse Entry:** The commodity cannot be imported into Canada.

(i) **Importations of these products are not regulated by the CFIA:** The commodity is not subject to CFIA regulations.

Note: If AIRS returns a message of "no record found", it does not necessarily mean importation is approved or has no CFIA requirements. It may mean that the associated risk has not yet been fully assessed by the CFIA. CFIA review and approval is required.

Please be aware that, in order to respond to emerging threats, the CFIA may implement requirements or restrictions that take precedence over any import recommendation indicated in AIRS.

Note: Some import requirements of other government departments, such as Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Global Affairs Canada may also be listed in AIRS, but, these are not necessarily all inclusive or up-to-date and it is the responsibility of the importer to determine all import requirements.

AIRS has been prepared for the convenience of reference only and has no official sanction. For all purposes of interpreting and applying the law, users should consult the legislation passed by Parliament.

References

Issuing office:

Other Government Department Programs Unit
Commercial Program Directorate
Programs Branch
Canada Border Services Agency

Headquarters file:

7616
4617-4

Legislative references:

[Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act](#)
[Canada Border Services Agency Act](#)
[Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act](#)
[Customs Act](#)
[Feeds Act](#)
[Fertilizers Act](#)
[Food and Drugs Act](#)
[Health of Animals Act](#)
[Plant Protection Act](#)
[Safe Food for Canadians Act](#)
[Seeds Act](#)

Other references:

[D1-4-1](#), [D3-series](#), [D5-1-1](#), [D8-2-16](#), [D10-18-1](#), [D10-18-6](#), [D17-series](#), [D19-7-1](#), [D19-8-5](#), [D19-9-1](#),
[D19-10-2](#), [D19-10-3](#), [D19-12-1](#), [D19-12-2](#), [D20-1-1](#), [D21-1-1](#), [D22-1-1](#)

Superseded memorandum D:

D19-1-1 dated June 21, 2017

Date modified:

2019-01-24