



Mexico: Import Requirements for Slaughter Horses

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MEXICO

IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR SLAUGHTER HORSES

According to the Ministries of Agriculture and Treasury in Mexico, the legal documents required by Mexico for slaughter horses imported from the United States are:

- An United States Origin Health Certificate
- Original Contract Entered Into Between the Importer and a Slaughter Plant in Mexico
- Import Certificate
- Import Petition Document
- Commercial Invoice

The documents and their use are explained in greater detail in the following report.

I. United States Origin Health Certificate

Mexico requires an International Health Certificate for the import of animals from the United States. The certificate must be issued by a veterinarian authorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).¹ The certificate must contain the names and addresses of the exporter and the importer.² Furthermore, the veterinarian must certify that the horses in the shipment were examined and found to be clinically healthy. The veterinarian must also certify that the horses will be transported in clean and disinfected vehicles and that they will not come into contact with any other animals not included in the shipment.³ The completed and signed certificate must be endorsed by a USDA Veterinary Services area office in order to be valid.⁴

The National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), a division of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, regulates the export of animals, animal products, and biologics.⁵ Information about U.S. export requirements of animals is available on the NCIE website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/iregs/animals/>. In addition, the

¹ *Requisitos Zoonosarios para la Importacion, FUNCION ZOOTECNICA, Ministry of Agriculture Official Website, at <http://senasicaw.senasica.sagarpa.gob.mx/hojafun.asp>.*

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *International Animal Export Regulations, available in the official website of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/iregs/animals/>.*

⁵ *The National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) website, at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/>.*

USDA Office of Veterinary Services (VS) provides a list of field offices where International Health Certificates may be obtained. The list is available on the VS website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/area_offices.htm.

II. Original Contract Entered Into Between the Importer and a Slaughter Plant in Mexico

Upon arrival to a Mexican port of entry, the animals must be inspected by a veterinarian from the Ministry of Agriculture (hereinafter SAGARPA, which is the acronym for the Ministry of Agriculture in Mexico). At the time of the inspection, the importer must prove, with the appropriate documents (originals, no copies), that a slaughter plant with a destination in Mexico has agreed to receive and process the animals. These documents must be authorized by a SAGARPA field office in the state where the slaughter plant of destination is located. In addition, the contract must be acknowledged by the managing veterinarian of the slaughter plant.⁶

⁶ *Supra note 1.*

At the time of the inspection, the importer must describe the route that will be followed for delivery of the animals to the slaughter plant. The Mexican veterinarian will verify that the animals are clinically healthy and free of signs of infectious disease. After the inspection, trucks will be sealed by the Mexican veterinarian. The seals may only be removed by the veterinarian in charge of the slaughter plant authorized to receive the animals.⁷

III. Import Certificate

After the shipment passes inspection, SAGARPA officers will issue an Import Certificate. This is the official document that certifies that the animals inspected by SAGARPA comply with the import sanitary requirements. As a general guideline, the cargo has eight calendar days from the date this document is issued to arrive at its final destination.⁸ The document costs approximately \$120.⁹ The original copy is required at Mexican Customs.

IV. Import Petition Document

An import petition document represents the formal petition before Mexican Customs authorities to import goods.¹⁰ The petition document is provided by the Mexican Customs Service and must be processed by the importer with the advice of a customs broker.¹¹ An original of this document is required at Mexican Customs.

V. Commercial Invoice

As in a domestic transaction, the commercial invoice is a bill for the goods from the seller to the buyer. A commercial invoice should include basic information about the transaction, including, in the present case, a description of the horses and their value, and the names and addresses of the consignor and the consignee.¹²

Finally, there is an additional document that, although not strictly required to clear Customs in Mexico, will be needed in order to get a preferential duty rate. This document is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Certificate of Origin. NAFTA provides for lower or zero tariffs on

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Triptico para la Expedicion del Certificado de Importacion Fitozoosanitario, 4, Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, at www.senasica.sagarpa.gob.mx/carta/carta_con_firma.pdf.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Procedimiento para la Importacion de Mercancias, I, Aduana Mexico, Mexican Customs Service, at: http://www.aduanas.sat.gob.mx/guia/GI_04_noviembre_2003.doc.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

United States-Mexico NAFTA trade.¹³ Exemption from duty means the U.S. qualifying products are more price-competitive and therefore more attractive to the Mexican and Canadian importers and consumers. U.S. qualifying products can only benefit from the preferential tariff if the importer has a NAFTA Certificate from the exporter.¹⁴

The Certificate of Origin must be completed and signed by the exporter of the goods.¹⁵ The U.S. Department of Commerce, through its division of Trade Information Center, provides information pertaining to the NAFTA Certificates of Origin, at 1-800-USA-TRADE.

VI. Additional Information

A. Ports of Entry in Mexico Authorized to Process Exports of Horses

All animals must be inspected by a Mexican veterinarian at a facility authorized to conduct animal health inspections in one of the following ports of entry to Mexico: Mazatlán, Agua Prieta, Mexicali, Altamira, Monterrey, Cancún, Nogales, Ciudad Acuña, Nuevo Laredo, Ciudad Camargo, Ojinaga, Ciudad Hidalgo, Piedras Negras, Ciudad Juárez, Progreso, Ciudad Miguel Alemán, Ciudad Reynosa (Sección Aduanera Nuevo Amanecer, Ciudad Reynosa, Tamps.), Querétaro, Colombia, San Luis Río Colorado, Ensenada, Guadalajara, Tijuana, Guaymas, Toluca, Lázaro Cárdenas, Manzanillo, Veracruz, Matamoros, and Mexico City International Airport.¹⁶

B. Customs Brokers

Mexican Customs Law expressly provides that, except in limited circumstances, only customs brokers may carry out the procedures relating to the clearance of merchandise before the Mexican Customs Service.¹⁷ Therefore, in order to import merchandise into Mexico, it is indispensable to hire the services of a customs broker. The U.S. Department of Commerce, through its Division of Market Access and Compliance, NAFTA Office, provides a comprehensive list of customs brokers in Mexico at <http://www.mac.doc.gov/nafta/8402.htm>.

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¹³ *NAFTA Certificate of Origin, Trade Information Center, Trade Development, at www.export.gov.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Anexo 21 de las Reglas de Caracter General en Materia de Comercio Exterior para 2004, Aduanas autorizadas para tramitar el despacho aduanero de determinado tipo de mercancías, D.O. Mar. 31, 2004.*

¹⁷ *Ley Aduanera, 40, D.O. Dec. 15, 1995.*

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