



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

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20250-0258

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TO: Regional Directors
Federal-State Supervisors
Shell Egg Graders

FROM: Roger L. Glasshoff
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SUBJECT: Export Certification Requirements – General Requirements

With the increased concerns regarding the potential spread of avian diseases relative to the import of poultry products, including shell eggs, foreign government authorities are requiring government assurances that imported food products are safe.

Officials with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA, maintain jurisdiction for authorization of “Disease Free Statements” issued by the Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program for the export certification of shell eggs. The assurances relative to sanitary and zoosanitary (animal health) certification are associated with international trade agreements and reflect the standards established by the Office of International Epizootics of the World Animal Health Organization. Under these agreements, a certificate issued by government officials or a competent authority of the government agency with jurisdiction for the product shall indicate that the imported animal product is fit for human consumption and clean (tested with negative results) of specified animal disease(s).

Officials with APHIS have established applicable policies stating that exported shell eggs and unprocessed wooden materials (when applicable) must be certified to meet international trade agreements for Sanitary, Zoosanitary (animal health) and any defined Phytosanitary (plant health) requirements. Therefore, exported shell eggs (table eggs, U.S. Grade B or better; or, washed nest-run eggs for further processing) must be certified as fit for human consumption and graded to meet applicable USDA grade standards for shell eggs. Any country specific item or exemptions to the verification requirements stated in this memorandum will be detailed in the certification instructions for the identified country. Upon determining conformance with these requirements, the Shell Egg Grading Certificate (SEA), Form PY-210S, and the authorized Disease Free Statements for the identified country of destination will be issued by the USDA grader to accompany the shipment.

As a competent authority recognized by APHIS, the USDA graders are not authorized to modify the animal health statements approved by APHIS officials. Any request to modify certification procedures must be submitted through appropriate supervisory channels for authorization.

I. Verification Of Animal Health Requirements For Layer Flocks

Fundamental to the assurances provided by APHIS to foreign government authorities is the monitoring of breeder flocks for avian diseases under the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

As the authorized certifying agent for shell eggs, verification of the monitoring of the breeder flock under the NPIP program is the responsibility of the USDA grader issuing the certification documents. Most hatcheries in the U.S. participate in the NPIP monitoring program and provide official certification to egg producers purchasing hatching eggs, chicks, or breeding stock. The APHIS affidavit, Veterinary Services (VS) Form 9-3, Report of Sales of Hatching Eggs, Chicks, and Poults, issued by either a USDA veterinarian or an accredited State veterinarian, is utilized for each sale and confirms the breeder flock from which the hatching eggs or the chicks originated was monitored under the NPIP program. This serial numbered report of sale identifies the producer and purchaser (applicable name and address), quantity, description of the stock, and a date of issuance (**Exhibit I**).

Prior to issuance of the PY-210S and appropriate Disease Free Statements for any export shipment, management must provide a copy(s) of VS 9-3 applicable to the source flock for the eggs presented for certification to the USDA grader. Recognizing that hatching eggs and chicks will normally not be delivered to an egg production site, plant management must provide a Certificate of Conformance (CoC) stating that the identified source flock(s) for the shipment of shell eggs (name, address, and flock identity) is covered by the attached VS 9-3 report of sale. The CoC must be typed on company letterhead stationery, reference the VS 9-3 covering the layer flock (serial number and date of issuance on the applicable form), and be signed by plant management or an authorized representative of the company.

The production cycle of a layer flock will normally not exceed a period of one year, with the exception of molted flocks. Therefore, in order to assure the source flock information remains current and relative to the VS 9-3, a company CoC must be issued annually or whenever the egg production site is repopulated with a new flock and is covered by an updated, VS 9-3. Plant management is responsible for maintaining the VS 9-3 and providing the CoC prior to processing the eggs for export certification. A processor purchasing eggs from another company for export certification must provide the above required documents for each source flock to the USDA grader prior to processing.

The Form PY-210S and appropriate Disease Free Statements covering the export of shell eggs, including breaking stock and nest run eggs, will not be issued prior to USDA verification of the above referenced documents (VS 9-3 and company-issued CoC).

II. Certificate Completion

A. General Forms Completion.

The Disease Free Statements authorized by APHIS for export certification are negotiated with foreign government officials. Officials with APHIS will advise the National Office of any changes involving these specific statements. Upon notification, the National Office will advise the Regional Office of the occurrence of an avian disease that will affect the issuance of Disease Free Statements.

To assure that the appropriate Disease Free Statements are issued for the export shipment, plant management must provide a name and address for the receiver/buyer of the product in the country of destination to be placed on Form PY-210S. Indicating "To Be Sold" as the "Receiver" on an export certificate is not acceptable. This policy is consistent with the export requirements for meat and poultry products.

Every precaution must be taken to provide a legible copy of the Form PY-210S and Disease Free Statements to accompany the shipment. Therefore, all export certificates and Disease Free Statements issued by USDA shell egg graders must be typed. Handwritten documents covering export shipments are no longer acceptable, including the Disease Free Statements and any amendment covering revisions to an issued official certificate. Numerous typographical errors, although initialed by the grader, may be justification by a foreign government border inspector to refuse entry of a shipment covered by the document. Graders should make full use of worksheets to record information prior to typing a certificate and complete a thorough review of the certificate, Disease Free Statements, or any amendment before releasing the official export documents to plant management.

To provide added assurance to destination authorities and consignors (recipients/buyers) that: Shell Egg Grading Certificates, Amendment(s), or the Disease Free Statements are official, the documents shall contain:

- **The USDA grader's name must be typed or printed with a ballpoint pen in the immediate area (next to, above or below) of the signature line.**
- **The USDA grader must sign these documents with a blue ballpoint ink pen.**
- **The USDA grader must place the USDA Graded for Export stamp (in blue ink), which includes the sequential number of the certificate issued, on each official document [certificate, any amendment issued, and the Disease Free Statements (Exhibit II)].**

B. Shell Egg Grading Certificate Completion

If the egg processor requests additional copies of the certificate for presentation to the purchaser(s) as an official document, a photocopy of the issued certificate may be signed (blue ballpoint ink pen) by the same grader issuing the certificate and the USDA Graded for Export stamp (in blue ink) placed on each requested document.

The importer is responsible for presenting the original of these documents to authorities at the point of entry to the foreign country.

III. Notification of Changes to Requirements

When foreign government officials define specific certification criteria, guidance relative to the export certification of shell eggs to that country will be filed in Section E, Exports, of the Supervisors/Resident Graders Shell Egg Index. Basic document information relative to the certification of shell eggs (including the issuance of amendments or superseding certificates) can be found in Section 10, of the Shell Egg Graders Handbook.

Supervisors will review this memorandum during a supervisory visit with all qualified shell eggs graders and plant management. File this memorandum as E-01, Exports, in the Supervisors/ Resident Graders Shell Egg Index.

Exhibit I: VS 9-3, Report of Sales of Hatching Eggs, Chicks, and Poults

Exhibit II: Disease Free Certification Statements with USDA Graded for Export Stamp



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Disease Free Certification Statements for Other Countries

Shell Egg Grading Certificate No. SEA - _____ Dated: _____

“The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services certifies that:

No cases of lethal (highly pathogenic) avian influenza (fowl plague), including the highly pathogenic subtype H5N1, and no cases of velogenic Newcastle disease (VND) have been reported in commercial laying chicken flocks in the county(ies) of origin where the eggs originated for the 6 months preceding departure of this consignment. These eggs were produced in the county(ies) in the state of (state name) identified below:

The shell eggs covered by this certificate were produced by birds originating from Salmonella enteritidis (SE) -certified breeding flocks which have not been identified within 90 days before shipment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, as being infected with SE, including SE phage type 4.”

Printed Name and Signature of Grader

