

In the Government's own words.....

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Regulations Amending the Health of Animals Regulations (Identification and Traceability)

www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2023/2023-03-18/html/reg1-eng.html

Overall, the proposed Regulations would create an animal traceability system in Canada that includes consistent requirements for all regulated species, namely pigs and wild boars, cattle, bison, sheep, goats and cervids. Specifically, the proposed regulatory amendments would

- (1) Add goats and cervids to the scope of the national traceability system. This includes
 - introducing identification requirements; and
 - introducing event and movement reporting requirements.
- (2) Modify existing traceability requirements by
 - introducing movement reporting requirements for all ruminants;
 - shortening reporting time requirements for cattle, bison and sheep;
 - introducing requirements for the identification of premises; and
 - amending indicator requirements to improve the collection of information and to allow for innovation and flexibility.
- (3) Update the Regulations to increase agility and efficiency by
 - modernizing the requirements for the use of approved indicators; and
 - repealing the record-keeping requirements.

2. Modifications to existing traceability requirements

Improving the accessibility, timeliness, and accuracy of animal identification and movement information and applying it to currently regulated species (pigs, bison, cattle, and sheep) and proposed new species (goats and cervids), would enhance CFIA's traceability program by equipping it with the information required to effectively trace animals and manage disease outbreaks. The proposed regulations add new traceability requirements, along with certain exceptions, to support national traceability.

Introduction of movement reporting requirements for regulated species

The proposed Regulations would introduce movement reporting requirements for cattle, bison, sheep, goats, and cervids to bring alignment with pigs and farmed wild boars which are already subject to such requirements. This means that when regulated species are moved from one site to another, by means of conveyance or otherwise, it would generally be the responsibility of the operator of the destination site to report the movement to the responsible administrator within seven calendar days. An exception to this rule is proposed for cervids, where the operator of the departure site would be responsible to report the information, as described in section 1 above.

The report would include the following **mandatory information**:

- the animal's identification number;
- the premises identification number of the departure and destination sites;
- the date and time of departure and arrival of the conveyance; and
- the conveyance identification.

Additional specific requirements

While the movement reporting requirements will be generally aligned across the system, the proposed Regulations would include additional specific requirements to take into consideration the speed of commerce and nuances between various sites and species.

Departure site reporting for cervids

There is a proposed exception for the movement of cervids, whereas it would be the responsibility of the operator of the departure site to report the departure of the animal to the Responsible Administrator.

Movement reporting within a farm

The operator of a farm keeping bison, cattle, sheep, goats, cervids, or pigs, or their carcasses, would be exempt from reporting their movement **within the farm** (land, and all buildings and other structures on that land, which is used under one management).

Movement reporting between a farm and a leased pasture

There would be no requirement for operators of a farm to **report the movement** of bison, cattle, sheep, goats, cervids, or pigs between a farm and a pasture that is leased for grazing purposes and where all animals assembled and co-mingled on the pasture originate from that farm.

Movement reporting to community pastures

Community pastures where animals from more than one farm are assembled and commingled often have multiple entry sites and may not be managed by a specific operator. Reporting the receipt of animals at these sites is therefore not practical. For this reason, the operator of a community pasture would be exempted from the movement reporting requirement.

In the proposed Regulations, when cattle, bison, sheep, goats, cervids, or pigs are moved from a farm to a community pasture, by means of a conveyance or otherwise, the operator of the departure site would have to report to the Responsible Administrator the departure and the return of the animals. Individual identification numbers of the animals would not have to be reported, but instead the species and number of animals of each species that were transported or moved would be required.

Group movement reporting at assembly points (auction markets and assembly yards)

While the general requirements for movement reporting will apply to assembly points, the operator of an assembly point would be exempted from declaring the individual identification number of each animal and instead, would be required to report animals as a group. This would include the species of each animal received at the assembly point and the number of animals of each species that were transported rather than their individual identification numbers.

Even though these types of sites are high risk for spreading disease due to co-mingling of animals, this exemption was given with the understanding that the beef cattle industry could not support the individual reporting of animals received because of the associated costs and impacts on the speed of commerce.

Movement reporting for abattoirs

Pigs, cattle, and bison already require reporting at slaughter. The proposed Regulations would include all regulated species arriving at an abattoir, and the operators of abattoir^{footnote9} would be required to report the following information:

- the identification number of approved indicators on the animals (after slaughter) or carcasses; or
- if there is a herd mark, the number of pigs and pig carcasses; and
- the premises identification number of the departure site and the abattoir.

The following information would be required to be reported or kept in record (ruminants only):

- date and time of loading and unloading of the animals; and
- the conveyance identification (licence plate or other ID).

If animals that have arrived at an abattoir are moved to a temporary site, are not commingled with other animals, and then moved back to the abattoir, the operator of the abattoir would be exempt from reporting individual animal identification in this instance but would be required to report the number of animals returning.

The operators of abattoirs would no longer be exempted from reporting the identification number of foreign indicators applied to bison and cattle imported for immediate slaughter.

Movement reporting for rendering plants

Cattle, bison, and sheep already require reporting when disposed of at a rendering plant. With the proposed regulations, the operators of rendering plants would be required to report the identification number of approved indicators applied to the carcasses of bison, cattle, sheep, goats, and cervids disposed of at their site.

Movement reporting for importers and exporters

Reporting requirements exist for importers of cattle, bison, sheep, and pigs, and for exporters of cattle, bison, and pigs. The proposed amendments would require persons importing or exporting any regulated species to follow the general requirements for movement reporting and to report the foreign country and subdivisions of that country (e.g. a state of the United States) from which the animals were imported or to which they were exported.

Movement reporting for fairs, exhibitions, veterinary clinics, and other sites

Operators of sites where animals are kept and commingled would be responsible for reporting the minimal information (detailed above) to the Responsible Administrator within seven days of reception of animals at their site.

Responsibilities for livestock haulers (carriers)

With the proposed Regulations, commercial carriers of all regulated livestock would be required to ensure that information accompanies a load of regulated animals or load of their carcasses being transported.

The information would need to be in a form that can be read without delay by an inspector and the operator of the destination site. The information could be provided in an electronic or paper format, with no required template. Every person required to make certain the information accompanies an animal or carcass would be required to keep a record of the document for a period of two years.

The proposed requirements would align with the existing requirement for pigs and pig carcasses. They would also align with Part XII of the HAR respecting the transportation of live animals.

The proposed requirement for a document to accompany a load of animals or load of animal carcasses being transported would not apply to

- animals and carcasses of animals being transported for import and export because import permits and export certificate requirements already apply;
- bison, cattle, sheep, goats and cervids and their carcasses transported within a farm, because their movements would not be required to be reported; or
- pigs or pig carcasses that are transported between contiguous parts of a farm, as this exemption is already in place.

The prohibition to transport bison, cattle and sheep without bearing an approved indicator would be maintained and be extended to goats and cervids. However, the prohibition to receive bison, cattle, sheep, goats or cervids without bearing an approved indicator would be repealed because the responsibility to identify the animals belongs to the person loading the animals and is outside the control of the operator of the destination site.

Passive-reading principle for reading an approved indicator

In order to be compliant with the requirement to report the identification number of an approved indicator, the operator of the site (for example a feedlot) could decide to manually read and report the information or to use animal indicator reading equipment. As long as certain conditions are met, the operator of the site (see exceptions below) using reading equipment would not be required to report the identification number of approved indicators that were not read on the first try.

Exceptions to the rule above exist. The operator of an abattoir receiving the animal for the purpose of slaughter, the operator of any site receiving an animal for the purpose of disposal, and the operator that is importing or exporting the animal would be required to report the identification number of indicators even if the first read by the reading equipment was not successful.

This “passive-reading principle,” which would only apply to indicators that are designed to be read with animal indicator reading equipment and applied to an animal or carcass, was added to support compliance for those who are not currently subject to animal movement reporting requirements.

Amendments to time to report requirements

The proposed amendments to the time to report requirements would bring consistency across all regulated species (cattle, bison, sheep, pigs, farmed wild boars, cervids, and goats). It is proposed that requirements for cattle, bison and sheep be amended so that when animals are moved from one site to another, by means of a conveyance or otherwise, the operator of the destination site would have to report information to the responsible administrator within seven calendar days of the receipt of the animal. The reduction in time to report would also apply to all other reportable events, such as slaughter, new tag application, and carcass disposal.

Introduction of premises identification requirements

Operators of sites where regulated livestock species are kept, assembled, or disposed of would be required to obtain a premises identification number of the site in order to purchase animal indicators and to report the movement of animals. The identification of premises would enable the rapid and accurate determination of the departure or destination points of animals.

The provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the identification of sites where animals are kept, assembled or disposed of. In order for premises to be identified and receive a unique identification number, the operator of a site would provide information related to those sites (contact information, location, animal species kept, and type of operation) to the government of the province where the premises are located. Once the information is validated, the provincial government would assign a premises identification number of the site. All provincial governments currently have in place either a mandatory or voluntary system for issuing premises identification numbers of sites.

If a premises identification number of the site was not assigned by the provincial or territorial government, the operator of the site would be required to report the same information it would have reported to a provincial government to the responsible administrator for the latter to assign a temporary identification number to those premises. Provincial governments would later validate the information provided to the responsible administrator and provide an official premises identification number of the site.

Efforts have been made (e.g. through regulations, cross-compliance, communications) to identify all premises where livestock may be kept, assembled or disposed of prior to the proposed Regulations coming into force. At this time, more than 100 000 premises where animals are kept, assembled or disposed of have been identified by provinces.

While the existing requirements for pigs and farmed wild boars are comprehensive, the additional information requirements on geographical location of sites where animals are located will greatly aid in disease responses, specifically to an African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak, which would entail zoning and other geographical restrictive measures. Many smaller “backyard” producers who are at high risk for inadvertently introducing ASF into Canada would be required to provide much more information on their premises through the provincial premises identification (PID) programs.

Modifications to requirements related to the use of animal indicators

The existing identification requirements for bison, cattle, sheep, pigs, and farmed wild boar would remain largely the same. However, some amendments are proposed to the use of animal indicators to improve the location information collected. Additionally, the proposed amendments would allow for improved flexibility when approved indicators are broken or applied incorrectly, or when there is an animal welfare concern.

Cattle, sheep, and bison

Producers would still be required to apply an approved indicator to bison, cattle or sheep before it leaves the farm of origin and when they receive it from another operation if it does not bear one already.

The proposed amendments would require persons buying approved indicators to report to the responsible administrator, at the time of purchase, the premises identification number of the site where the indicators would be applied to the animals or the equivalent information.

Additionally, the application of an approved indicator to an animal received from another operation that does not bear one would be an event required to be reported to the responsible administrator within seven calendar days. Currently, such information is only required to be recorded.

Under the proposed amendments, only bison or cattle that may cause serious injury or death to any person who attempts to identify them or that would be seriously injured during an attempt to identify them would be permitted to be transported without bearing an approved indicator to an approved identification site. Approved identification sites (tagging sites) would be restricted to assembly points (auction marts, assembly yards). Sites like feedlots and farms would no longer be eligible to be designated as approved identification sites.

Finally, it would be clarified that parts of a ruminant^{footnote10} carcass moved to another site would be required to bear an approved indicator if it represents more than 50% of the ruminant's dead weight.

Pigs and farmed wild boars

Slap tattoos are currently a means of identification for pigs moved directly from a farm to an abattoir and for pigs moved directly from a farm to a site used exclusively for the purpose of collecting animals before they are transported to an abattoir. Under the proposed regulatory amendments, slap tattoos would still be an acceptable method of identification for sending pigs from a farm directly to the abattoir; however, pigs moving via a collection site (such as an assembly yard) would need to be identified with an approved tag. This is because the use of slap tattoo herd marks for pigs going to slaughter via a collection site has led to compliance verification challenges. It can be difficult to determine that a site is being used exclusively for collection purposes, and to verify that pigs are properly identified due to legibility issues. These challenges reduce inspectors' ability to verify compliance, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the traceability system, as pigs could be moving through a commingling site without proper identification.

In addition, the proposed amendments would also require that approved indicators issued by the responsible administrator be applied to pigs before export. This aligns generally with the current requirement that pigs must be identified before export by an indicator approved by the importing country.

Use of approved indicators outside Canada

The distribution of Canadian approved indicators to another person for the purpose of identifying regulated species (bison, cattle, sheep, goats and cervids) outside of Canada would be prohibited. This would prevent potential misrepresentation of the animal's country of origin for those conducting investigations if the diseased animal is not ultimately imported into Canada.

Permitting the removal of indicators in some cases

Under the current Regulations, there are no instances that allow for the removal of an approved indicator from an animal other than at slaughter or carcass disposal. The proposed amendments would introduce options for stakeholders to remove approved indicators applied to an animal if the indicator is damaged, not functioning, applied to the wrong species, or causing harm to the animal. The stakeholder would be required to provide evidence to a CFIA inspector who would then authorize the removal of the tag. In cases involving animal welfare concerns, the evidence may be presented up to seven days after the removal. In all instances, a new approved indicator would be required to be applied to the animal.

3. Increasing agility and efficiency in the Regulations

Agility with the approval of animal indicators and revised record-keeping requirements would support the development of innovation in the sector, such as new technologies and digital solutions, and increase efficiency across the system.

Modernizing the definition of animal indicators

The proposed amendments would not impose the use of a particular technology for approved tag requirements, allowing for innovation of livestock identification technology as the industry evolves. This would be accomplished by replacing the word "tag" with "approved indicator" in the Regulations. A framework for approving new indicators exists outside of the Regulations, but is also currently being updated to allow for innovation and the development of new animal identification technology.

Incorporation by reference of approved indicators

In addition, providing agility to the requirements surrounding animal indicators would be accomplished by incorporating by reference in the HAR the two following documents:

1. List of approved indicators and the circumstances upon which the indicator is approved; and
2. List of revoked indicators.

These documents would contain the current list of approved indicators for cattle, bison, sheep, and pigs, as well as the current list of pre-approved indicators available for cervids and goats. Documents incorporated by reference have the same force as the regulation into which it is incorporated. As a result, there would be increased rigour for approved indicators, their approval, and their methods of application while maintaining agility. They would be made available through CFIA's website, and approved and updated by the CFIA on a biannual basis by recommendation of responsible administrators.

Repeal of record-keeping requirements

The proposed amendments would require that records be maintained through reporting into the databases of the responsible administrators. Also, with movement and location reporting requirements in place, vital tracing information would be available to investigators without delay via digital database solutions, thereby eliminating the need for stakeholders to retain records. The current requirement to keep records of reported information on-site and make them available to an inspector upon request would be repealed. This would constitute a benefit for industry as the database would be easily accessed in the event of an outbreak, and record-keeping obligations would be removed.

In conclusion, achieving these objectives would directly benefit Canada's ability to protect livestock, human health and the agricultural economy through an efficient and modernized process. In addition, the proposed Regulations would play a role in enhancing access to global markets and maintaining market access for Canadian exports of animals and animal products.