

be moved from the port of entry to the designated feedlot in sealed conveyances. The only region we are proposing at this time to classify as BSE minimal-risk is the country of Canada. Under the current APHIS regulations and policy, bovines imported from Canada for movement directly to immediate slaughter do not have to be accompanied by the health certificate required under § 93.405 that attests to the animal's health history with regard to various diseases and pests. However, the bovines must be moved to slaughter in a sealed conveyance. **(Please note:** The regulations in part 93 use the term "cattle" rather than "bovines."

However, in § 93.400, *cattle* is defined as animals of the bovine species.) Because of the requirement for direct movement to slaughter in a sealed conveyance, there is little danger the bovines will be diverted on their way to the slaughtering establishment. Those requirements would remain unchanged by this proposed rule, although animals for immediate slaughter would have to be accompanied with the certification with regard to BSE specified in this proposal.

Under the current regulations, however, bovines imported from Canada for other than immediate slaughter do have to be accompanied by a certificate attesting to their health history with regard to various diseases, in order to ensure they do not spread such diseases to other livestock in this country. Because of their acceptable health history, it has not been necessary to require that the animals be moved in a sealed conveyance. This requirement for a health certificate would remain in place for bovines imported from Canada for feeding before slaughter (and be joined with the certification with regard to BSE specified in this proposal). Because of this health certification, and because, with regard to BSE, the bovines would have to be tattooed with the letters CAN, possible diversion is not an issue and we do not consider it necessary to begin to require that feeder bovines be moved from the U.S. port of entry to the designated feedlot in a sealed conveyance.

Additionally, we are not requiring that the bovines be moved from the designated feedlot to slaughter as a group. A shipment of bovines that arrives at a feedlot may contain animals of varying ages. Some will be ready for shipment to slaughter before others. However, we would require that all animals moved from the designated feedlot be moved directly to slaughter, where they would be identifiable as a shipment from a minimal-risk region by the required ear tattoo.

Sheep or Goats Less Than 12 Months of Age for Immediate Slaughter

Section 93.436, paragraph (c), would allow the importation of sheep or goats under the following conditions:

- The sheep or goats are less than 12 months of age at the time of importation.
- The sheep or goats are not known to have been fed ruminant protein, other than milk protein, during their lifetime.
- The sheep or goats are accompanied by authorized official certification, as described above, that the above conditions have been met.
- The sheep or goats are moved directly from the port of entry as a group to a recognized slaughtering establishment in conveyances sealed at the port of entry with seals of the United States Government, which are broken only at the slaughtering establishment by a USDA representative, and must be slaughtered as a group. The shipment is accompanied by an APHIS Form VS 17–33.

Although there is no naturally occurring BSE infection of sheep and goats, the species can be infected with the BSE agent experimentally. However, in view of the relatively young age of the sheep and goats that would be allowed importation (we would allow importation of sheep and goats only of 12 months of age or less, the industry standard for commercial shipments of such animals), the likelihood that these sheep or goats could provide a source of infection is extremely low.

Sheep or Goats Less Than 12 Months of Age Moved to a Designated Feedlot and Then To Slaughter

We would apply the slaughtering conditions described above to sheep or goats imported for slaughter in the United States after first being contained at a designated feedlot in this country. However, instead of being moved directly from the port of entry to a recognized slaughtering establishment, such animals would be moved to a designated feedlot, and then directly to a recognized slaughtering establishment. For identification purposes, prior to being imported into the United States, each sheep and goat would have to have been tattooed inside one ear with letters identifying the exporting country. Sheep and goats from Canada would have to be tattooed with the letters "CAN."

Therefore, § 93.436(d) would allow the importation of sheep and goats under the following conditions:

- The sheep and goats are not known to have been fed ruminant protein, other than milk protein, during their lifetime and are less than 12 months of age at the

time of importation into the United States.

- The inside of one ear on each animal is permanently and legibly tattooed with letters identifying the exporting country.
- The sheep or goats are accompanied by authorized official certification, as described above, that the above conditions have been met.
- The sheep or goats are moved directly from the port of entry as a group to a designated feedlot and the shipment is accompanied by an APHIS Form VS 1–27.
- The sheep or goats are moved directly from the designated feedlot to a recognized slaughtering establishment for slaughter. The shipment is accompanied by APHIS Form VS 1–27.
- The sheep and goats are less than 12 months of age when slaughtered.

Cervids for Immediate Slaughter

Section 93.436, paragraph (e), would allow the importation of cervids under the following conditions:

- The cervids were members of a herd in which surveillance for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE's) was conducted by appropriate authorities according to national standards or standards of the region itself if the region is a jurisdiction that has effective oversight of normal animal movements into, out of, or within the region and that, in association with national authorities if necessary, has the responsibility for controlling animal disease locally.
- The herd is not known to have been infected with or exposed to a TSE.
- The cervids were born after the implementation of a ban on feeding of ruminant protein to ruminants.
- The cervids were not known to have been fed ruminant protein, other than milk protein, during their lifetime.
- The cervids are accompanied by authorized official certification, as described above, that the above conditions have been met.
- The cervids are moved from the port of entry as a group directly to a recognized slaughtering establishment in conveyances sealed at the port of entry with seals of the United States Government, which are broken only at the slaughtering establishment by a USDA representative. The cervids must be slaughtered as a group. The shipment is accompanied by an APHIS Form VS 17–33.

As ruminants, cervids are subject to import restrictions because of BSE. We believe that the above conditions are necessary for the importation of cervids intended for immediate slaughter, because, although there have been no