

Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with section 3507(d) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the information collection or recordkeeping requirements included in this proposed rule have been submitted for approval to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Please send written comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for APHIS, Washington, DC 20503. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 03–080–1. Please send a copy of your comments to: (1) Docket No. 03–080–1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238, and (2) Clearance Officer, OCIO, USDA, room 404–W, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250. A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication of this proposed rule.

This proposed rule would recognize a category of regions that present a minimal risk of introducing BSE into the United States via live ruminants and ruminant products, and would add Canada to this category. The proposed rule would also allow the importation of certain live ruminants and ruminant products from such BSE minimal-risk regions under certain conditions.

Accomplishing this would require the use of several information collection activities, including the completion of certification statements for the importation of both ruminants and ruminant-derived products by the national veterinary authority of the region of origin, permits for the movement of restricted animals, forms associated with the importation of animals for immediate slaughter, the placing of seals on certain conveyances, and the tattooing of letters on certain livestock.

We are soliciting comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our proposed information collection and recordkeeping requirements. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of our agency's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the information collection on those who are to respond (such as through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology; *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of responses).

Estimate of burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response.

Respondents: Canadian veterinary authorities, herd owners, and exporters of ruminants and ruminant-derived products; slaughter plant and feedlot personnel in the United States, accredited veterinarians, and State veterinary authorities.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 6,000.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 20.

Estimated annual number of responses: 120,000.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 240,000 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

Government Paperwork Elimination Act Compliance

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is committed to compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), which requires Government agencies in general to provide the public the option of submitting information or transacting business electronically to the maximum extent possible. For information pertinent to GPEA compliance related to this proposed rule, please contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

List of Subjects

9 CFR Part 93

Animal diseases, Imports, Livestock, Poultry and poultry products, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

9 CFR Part 94

Animal diseases, Imports, Livestock, Meat and meat products, Milk, Poultry and poultry products, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

9 CFR Part 95

Animal feeds, Hay, Imports, Livestock, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Straw, Transportation.

Accordingly, we propose to amend 9 CFR parts 93, 94, and 95 as follows:

PART 93—IMPORTATION OF CERTAIN ANIMALS, BIRDS, AND POULTRY, AND CERTAIN ANIMAL, BIRD, AND POULTRY PRODUCTS; REQUIREMENTS FOR MEANS OF CONVEYANCE AND SHIPPING CONTAINERS

1. The authority citation for part 93 would continue to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1622 and 8301–8317; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

2. Section 93.400 would be amended by adding definitions of *as a group*, *designated feedlot*, and *USDA representative*, in alphabetical order, to read as follows:

§ 93.400 Definitions.

* * * * *

As a group. Collectively, in such a manner that the identity of the animals as a unique group is maintained.

* * * * *

Designated feedlot. A feedlot indicated on the declaration required under § 93.407 as the destination of the ruminants imported into the United States.

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USDA representative. A veterinarian or other individual employed by the United States Department of Agriculture who is authorized to perform the services required by this part.

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3. A new § 93.436 would be added to subpart D to read as follows:

§ 93.436 Ruminants from regions of minimal risk for BSE.

The importation of ruminants from regions listed in § 94.18(a)(3) of this subchapter is prohibited, unless the conditions of this section and any other applicable conditions of this part are met. Once the ruminants are imported, if they do not meet the conditions of this section, they must be disposed of as the Administrator may direct.

(a) *Bovines for immediate slaughter.*

Bovines from a region listed in § 94.18(a)(3) of this subchapter may be imported for immediate slaughter under the following conditions: