



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

APHIS eFile

Guidance for Using the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA)

April 2024

WELCOME!

The VS Permitting Assistant (VSPA) provides guidance on APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) requirements for international import, international transit, and domestic interstate movement of VS-regulated commodities. You must complete the Permitting Assistant to learn the admissibility requirements for your commodity(ies). You will only need to complete an application if a permit is required.

If applying for a multi-ingredient product, make sure to add all of your materials to your product ingredient list. Examples of multi-ingredient products include nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, diagnostic test kits, fertilizers.

For more APHIS eFile VSPA support materials:

Check out our "How to" playlist on the [APHIS YouTube Channel](#)

Review this and other User Guides online on the [APHIS eFile Training Page](#)

I AM AN APPLICANT



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Sign in to eFile

A Navigate to <https://efile.aphis.usda.gov/s/> in **Google Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari** (eFile is not supported by Internet Explorer).

- *Login is OPTIONAL. If your search results in an application, you will need to login in order to complete the application.*
 - **To log in: click Sign In/Sign Up**
 - If you do not have login credentials, select **Create an Account** and follow the steps to become eAuthenticated. **You must be eAuthenticated to apply in eFile.**
 - Login Credentials are issued to an **individual** and are **not** to be shared with others.

B Scroll to the Find What You Need section and select the **Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant link.**

The screenshot shows the APHIS eFile website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the USDA logo and the text 'Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service' and 'United States Department of Agriculture'. A 'SIGN IN | SIGN UP >' button is highlighted with a callout box labeled 'A'. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'HOME | GUIDE ME' menu. The main content area features a large banner with the text 'Welcome to APHIS eFile' and 'Apply and manage your APHIS applications, registrations, permits and more'. Below the banner, there is a 'Ready to Apply?' section with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select an option' and a 'Get started' button. To the right, there is a 'Find What You Need' section with the heading 'Is this your first time using APHIS eFile? Let us help you find what you need...'. This section contains four cards, each with an icon and a description of a service. The fourth card, 'Do you import or transit animal products, insects, bacteria, fungi, and/or viruses, and need assistance in finding out what documentation you need?', is highlighted with a callout box labeled 'C' and contains the text 'Check out our Veterinary Services (VS) Permitting Assistant.'

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 1

Complete the Permitting Assistant to begin the application process.

- A Select the **tab** associated with the type of material you are searching for.
- B Enter the **material details** into the appropriate search fields.
- C Select the **Search button**.

Note: Repeat steps A-C for all regulated commodities you wish to move. The VSPA will organize them into the appropriate applications.

The screenshot shows the 'Step 1: Select a Category Tab to Enter a Commodity's Details' interface. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Animal Products & Byproducts', 'Live Animals', and 'Organisms & Vectors'. The 'Live Animals' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a descriptive text: 'Live animals such as livestock (including horses), germplasm (semen, ova, embryos), and eggs, and...'.

Form fields include:

- Movement Type:** A dropdown menu with 'Import' selected.
- Commodity:** A text input field containing 'Alpaca (Vicugna pacos)'. Below it is a 'See List of Commodities' link. An information icon 'i' is next to the label.
- Purpose:** A dropdown menu with 'Zoo' selected. An information icon 'i' is next to the label.
- Country of Origin:** A text input field containing 'France'. Below it is a 'See List of Countries' link. An information icon 'i' is next to the label.

At the bottom right, there is a dark blue 'Search' button.

Callouts:

- A:** A box highlights the three category tabs.
- B:** A box highlights the 'Commodity' and 'Purpose' fields.
- C:** A box highlights the 'Search' button.

Additional callouts:

- A speech bubble points to the 'See List of Commodities' link: 'Use the "See List" hyperlinks to view full lists of your options'.
- A speech bubble points to the information icons: 'Select the "i" icons to reveal tool tips'.

Using the VSPA for Animal Products:

- Animal products are materials/products containing, derived from, or exposed to animal material (excluding organisms and vectors), hay/straw for animal feed or bedding, and used agricultural or meat equipment.
- Use the VSPA to Itemize your permit request by choosing the appropriate *animal-origin* materials/ingredients in your commodity(ies).
- There are two ways to itemize your request:

A as "single materials" - This is the case when the animal materials are being imported individually. For example, if you are importing bulk dried egg, bulk single-species fat, canned/bottled milk, tissue/blood samples, these are animal materials which are not mixed. Repeat the steps 1-2-3 to add each animal material from each animal to your request.

OR

B as a product/products containing 1 or more animal origin ingredients. Some examples of such commodities include nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, culture media, diagnostic test kits, and fertilizers. Use the "Create or Edit Product Ingredient List" button to create a named product (you can use a generic name, such as "nutraceutical", "pet food", etc.), and then repeat steps 1-2-3 of the VSPA to add each animal origin ingredient from each animal to your named product. Do not choose ingredient/material names in the VSPA that contain the word "bulk".

The screenshot shows the 'Step 1: Select a Category Tab to Enter a Commodity's Details' interface. It features three tabs: 'Animal Products & Byproducts' (selected), 'Live Animals', and 'Organisms & Vectors'. Below the tabs is a text input field containing the description: 'Materials/products containing, derived from, or exposed to animal material (excluding organisms and vectors), hay/straw for animal feed or bedding, and used agricultural or meat equipment.' To the right of the text field is a button labeled 'Create and Edit Product Ingredient Lists' with a dropdown arrow. A green circle with the letter 'B' is overlaid on the button.

Using the VSPA for Organisms and Vectors:

- Organisms and vectors include all cultures or collections of organisms, or their derivatives, or vectors (such as mosquitoes, ticks, etc.) which are known to cause or disseminate infectious disease among livestock or poultry animals.
 - This includes organisms that may not have been originally isolated from animals, but are known to cause disease among livestock or poultry (such as all influenza A viruses)
- Repeat the steps 1-2-3 on the VSPA to choose all the organisms and vectors you wish to receive.
- When using the VSPA to understand the import requirements for If you are searching for an Organism and Vector and are unable to find it on the list, select the **Not Found on the Organism or Vector List** checkbox. This will reveal an “Organism or Vector Name” field where you can free-text enter the name of your Organism or Vector.
 - Please note, if your movement type is interstate, this will not be an option.

Step 1: Select a Category Tab to Enter a Commodity's Details

Animal Products & Byproducts | Live Animals | **Organisms & Vectors**

Organisms, their derivatives, or vectors which may contain or be exposed to livestock, aquatic, and poultry pathogens.

Movement Type: Import

Category: Livestock or Poultry Pathogen

Organism or Vector: Other

Not Found on the Organism or Vector List
[See Full List of Organisms & Vectors](#)

Exposed to, Isolated from Animals/Animal Products: Ruminant Equine or Porcine

Organism or Vector Name: Enter your Organism or Vector's Name

Country of Origin: Search Country

Search

Using the VSPA for Live Animals:

- Live animals such as livestock (including horses), germplasm (semen, ova, embryos, and cloning tissue), birds, hatching eggs, and aquatic animals.
 - This includes horses, birds, pigs, cow, etc which may be "pets".
- Complete steps 1-2-3 on the VSPA to choose the live animals you wish to receive.

Step 1: Select a Category Tab to Enter a Commodity's Details

[Animal Products & Byproducts](#) | **Live Animals** | [Organisms & Vectors](#)

Live animals such as livestock (including horses), germplasm (semen, ova, embryos, and cloning tissue), birds, hatching eggs, and aquatic animals.

Movement Type
Select a Movement type ▼

Commodity ⓘ
Enter your Commodity here 🔍

Purpose ⓘ
Select the Intended Use of your Commodity ▼

Country of Origin ⓘ
Enter your Commodity's Country of Origin here 🔍

Search

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SEARCH PAGE

- Once you have completed step 1 of the VSPA and clicked "search", proceed to step 2 of the VSPA.

A Select the **Attribute Filters** to refine your material search results.

Note: For best results **complete ALL attribute filters** from top to bottom order until there is **only ONE result**. Then proceed to step 3 of the VSPA.

Be sure to **click on the "i" icons** to read the full explanation of the filter/question.

Some of the filters are selection-order dependent, meaning that your first selection may limit which filters you may select next.

Step 2: Select Attributes

2 filters applied [Clear All](#)

X To Be Consumed By | Animals

X Qualifies Under Guideline 1104 | No

A

To Be Consumed By **i**

Animals (1)

Humans (0)

Not for Consumption (0)

Qualifies Under Guideline 1104 **i**

Yes (0)

No (1)

Use the "X" to remove an individual filter and "Clear All" to remove all selected filters.

Select the "i" icons to reveal tool tips

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 3

Note: You will likely not need to adjust your view of the Result Cards, as you should use all attribute filters until **one result** remains.

Use the following tools to adjust your view of the Result Cards.

- A** Use the drop-down to **change the number of Result Cards per page**.
- B** Use the arrows to **view more pages** of Result Cards.
- C** Use the drop-down to sort by **Prescreening Result number (PR #) or Outcome**.
 - Each Result Card has a unique PR #. If you need to communicate with VS about a specific result card, you can use the PR #.

A Review the information on the Result Card.

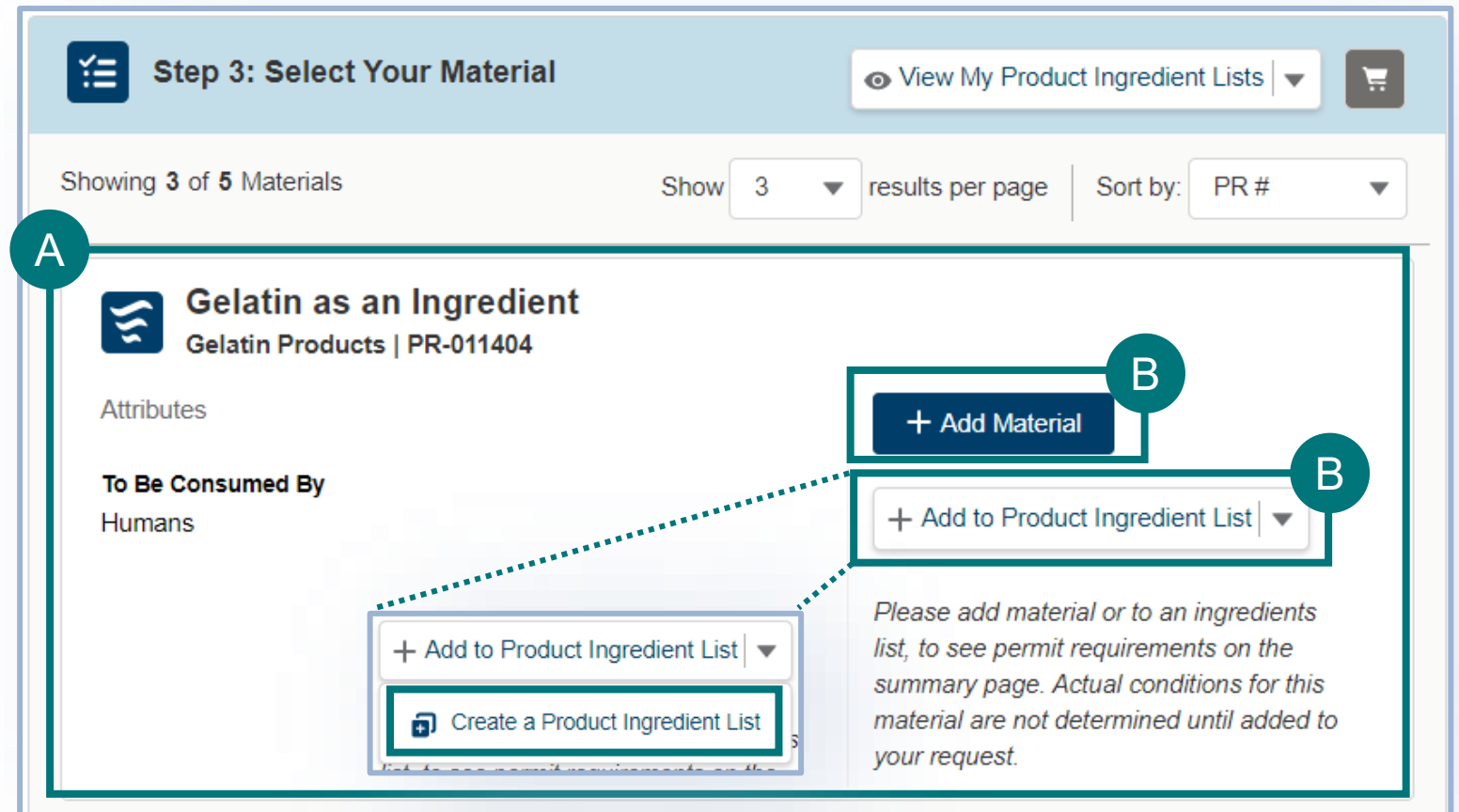
B Select **Add Material/Commodity** to add the material/commodity to your application

• **For animal products**

- Click add material if you are importing single materials (ex: single-species bulk material, tissue samples).

OR

- Select **Add to Product Ingredient List** to add the material to your application as an ingredient within a larger product (ex: nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, diagnostic test kits, fertilizers).
- To add a material as an ingredient you will need to **Create a Product Ingredient List**. By creating the list from this button, you'll automatically add the material to the new list.



Note: If you are importing Animal Products, **do NOT select both Add Material and Add to Product Ingredient List. Select only one option.**

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 3

To remove a single material, select the Remove Material button.

To remove an ingredient, uncheck the checkbox associated with the Product Ingredient List.

Note: You must use one of these two options to remove a material. Once you have added a material, refreshing the VSPA will not remove them.

To add additional materials, edit any of the search fields in step 1 and repeat the process.

A Once you've added all your materials proceed to your Application Summary by selecting the Shopping Cart icon or the View Summary button.

Step 3: Select Your Material View My Product Ingredient Lists

Showing 1 of 1 Materials Show 3 results per page Sort by: PR #

Bulk Gelatin or Empty Gelatin Capsules
Gelatin Products | PR-105548

Attributes
No attributes to be displayed.

Remove Material

Please add material or to an ingredients list, to see permit requirements on the summary page. Actual conditions for this

Gelatin in a Product as an Ingredient
Gelatin Products | PR-104147

Attributes

Drug That is FDA-approved for Commercial Use in the U.S. (approved NDA, NADA, ANDA, ANADA or OTC monograph) To Be Consumed By Animals

No

+ Add Material

+ Add to Product Ingredient List

pet food

Create a Product Ingredient List

material are not determined until added to your request.

View Summary

The VSPA Summary

The materials you have added have been sorted into categories. **Select each category tab** to view the results in that category.

Permit Application – Materials listed in this section require Permit applications. The materials have been sorted onto the appropriate number of applications. The materials you have added have been sorted into categories:

No Permit Required but Conditions Apply – Materials listed in this section do not require a permit application but may have additional conditions (i.e. a required certificate).

Inadmissible – Materials listed in this section are not allowed for import, transport, or transit.

The screenshot displays the VSPA Summary interface. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Permit Applications(2)', 'No Permit Required but Conditions Apply(1)', and 'Inadmissible'. The 'Permit Applications(2)' tab is selected and highlighted with a red border. Below the tabs, the main section is titled '1. VS 16-3 Import Permit Application' with a subtitle 'Subtotals (1 Products)' and an 'Estimated processing fee: \$150.00'. Underneath, the category 'pet food' is shown with '1 Materials'. A single material card is displayed with the title 'Gelatin in a Product as an Ingredient of Avian Origin', a blue icon, and the text 'Gelatin Products | PR-104147' and 'Import from Canada for Commercial Purposes'. Below the title, there are two columns of attributes: 'Drug That is FDA-approved for Commercial Use in the U.S. (approved NDA, NADA, ANDA, ANADA or OTC monograph)' with the value 'No', and 'To Be Consumed By' with the value 'Animals'. To the right of these attributes, there are two status indicators: a green checkmark followed by 'Permit Required' and the text 'You need a permit for this request.', and another green checkmark followed by 'Documentation Required' with a dropdown arrow.

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

Review the outcome carefully and read the guidance information.

Permit Application (s) – click on "documentation required" and read the guidance.

No Permit Required but Conditions


Apply or **Inadmissible** – click on the "view conditions letter" or "view letter of denial" button to read the reason that a permit is not needed or the reason the material is inadmissible.

Permit Applications(2) | No Permit Required but Conditions Apply(1) | Inadmissible

1. VS 16-3 Import Permit Application

Subtotals (1 Products) Estimated processing fee: \$150.00

pet food
1 Materials

 **Gelatin in a Product as an Ingredient of Avian Origin**
Gelatin Products | PR-104147
Import from Canada for Commercial Purposes

Attributes

Drug That is FDA-approved for Commercial Use in the U.S. (approved NDA, NADA, ANDA, ANADA or OTC monograph)	To Be Consumed By
No	Animals


✓ Permit Required
You need a permit for this request.

✓ **Documentation Required** ✓

Permit Applications(2) | **No Permit Required but Conditions Apply(1)** | Inadmissible

No Permit Required but Conditions Apply

Subtotals (1 Materials) Estimated processing fee: \$0.00

 **Bulk Gelatin or Empty Gelatin Capsules of Aquatic Animals Origin**
Gelatin Products | PR-105548
Import from Afghanistan for Commercial Purposes

Attributes

No attributes to be displayed.

✗ NO Permit Required
You do not need a permit for this request, since you are able to meet the applicable APHIS Guideline.

✓ Documentation Required

View Conditions Letter

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

A To delete a material from your summary request, select the **trashcan icon**.

B To add more materials, select **Go Back and Add More Materials**.

C When applicable, download all letters by selecting the **View Conditions Letter** button associated with each material.

D To send yourself or someone else a copy of this request summary, enter your **email** into the field and select **Send**.

- *****The summary is NOT a permit application.**

The screenshot shows the 'Applications Summary' page. At the top left, a button labeled 'Go Back and Add More Materials' is highlighted with a green box and callout 'B'. Below this are three tabs: 'Permit Applications(2)', 'No Permit Required but Conditions Apply(1)', and 'Inadmissible'. The main content area is titled 'No Permit Required but Conditions Apply' and shows a subtotal for '1 Material' with an estimated processing fee of '\$0.00'. A material entry is shown: 'Bulk Gelatin or Empty Gelatin Capsules of Aquatic Animals Origin' with a trashcan icon (callout 'A') and a 'View Conditions Letter' button (callout 'C'). A pop-up window displays the conditions letter text: 'NO Permit Required. You do not need a permit for this request, since you are able to meet the applicable APHIS Guideline. Documentation Required'. At the bottom right, a form labeled 'Email a Copy of the Overall Summary' (callout 'D') contains an email input field and a 'Send' button. A 'Disclaimer' button is also visible.



12/28/2020

Letter of Conditions

Dear Applicant,

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services regulates the international import, international transit, or interstate transport of certain animal-origin material, organisms, and vectors to ensure that infectious livestock and poultry diseases are not introduced into and/or disseminated within the United States. International movement of such material must be cleared by Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (DHS, CBP) Agriculture Specialists/Inspectors at the U.S. port of arrival.

Proceed to Application(s) from VSPA

SUMMARY PAGE

- A** Once you have reviewed all your results, select the **Proceed to Applications button** (it may appear as **"proceed to log in"** if you did not sign in yet) to continue to complete and submit your applications in eFile.
- Only the items from your summary which require the permit application will be transferred to the permit application.
 - If no items require a permit, then you will not be able to log in and apply for a permit.

Proceed to Applications

A

Proceed to Log-In

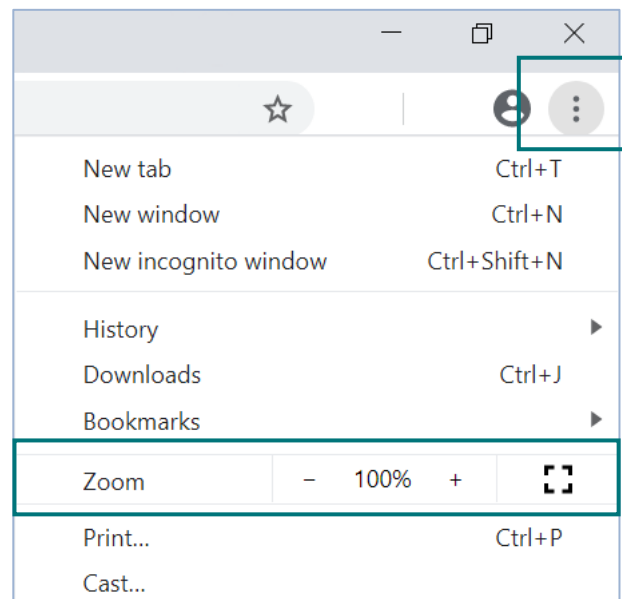
A

Note: In the two images shown, you can proceed to the permit application *only* for the permitted materials. The commodities not needing a permit will not be transferred to a permit application.

APPENDIX

System Setup

- **Browser** – For the best user experience, please use Google Chrome. Other available browsers include Firefox, Safari, and Edge.
- **Emails** – Add aphis.efile@usda.gov to your address book so that any Request Summaries sent from the VSPA do not go to your junk box
- **Zoom** –100%



Contact

If you require assistance with your **applications** (such as status requests, help with understanding the VSPA, etc), please contact:

Veterinary Services

(301) 851 3300

Animal Product, Organism & Vector Help:

APIE@usda.gov

Live Animals Help:

LAIPermits@usda.gov

If you require **technical assistance**, please contact:

help@usda.gov

Technical support includes account management, errors within the APHIS eFile system, or problems accessing information such as an issued permit. ***DO NOT** contact the helpdesk requesting a status on an application.