

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2005

RESOLUTION: 14 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON IMPORT/EXPORT

SUBJECT MATTER: PRIORITY PASSAGE FOR LIVE ANIMAL CARGO AT BORDER CROSSINGS

DATES: Hershey, Pennsylvania – November 3-9, 2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

With the usage of x-ray technology to screen cargo at border crossings, the waiting time has increased significantly.

There is inconsistency in the priority given to live animal cargos between ports of entry. Some allow more rapid passage for live animal transports, while at others the wait is for hours in line with all other cargo conveyances. In cases of weather extremes, the resultant long wait times can prove to be cruel as well as fatal to the animals.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not have a consistent protocol for live animal cargo. A process to allow vehicles with live animal cargo to move ahead of inanimate cargo should be developed to avoid suffering of animals.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to communicate to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection Directorate (CBPD) the need to develop a process to allow vehicles with live animals on board to advance ahead of other vehicles in line that are carrying inanimate cargo to enhance the well being of the animals and to avoid suffering.

RESPONSE:

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE, VETERINARY SERVICES (APHIS-VS)

The National Center for Import and Export will enter into discussions with Customs and Border Patrol to determine if a mechanism for granting priority to shipments of live animals can be developed. If so, such a mechanism will be developed.

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION (CBP)

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) understands the need to facilitate the processing of compliant shipments of live animals at our ports of entry. Livestock carriers should consider participating in CBP voluntary partnership programs, such as Free and Secure Trade (FAST). The FAST program is a Border Accord Initiative between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. FAST is designed to ensure security and safety while enhancing the economic prosperity of each country. The FAST program allows known low-risk participants and low-risk cargo (low-risk for terrorism) to receive expedited border processing. Where available, CBP has dedicated lanes for those that apply and are accepted into the FAST program.

Eligibility for the FAST program requires participants (carrier, drivers, importers, and southern border manufacturers) to submit an application, agreement, and security profile depending on their role in the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). C-TPAT is a joint government and business initiative to build cooperative relationships that strengthen overall supply chain and border security. Through this initiative, CBP asks businesses to ensure the integrity of their security practices and communicate their security guidelines to their business partners within the supply chain.

For information on the FAST and C-TPAT programs, visit the CBP Web site at www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import. FAST information is also available on the Canada Border Security Web site, at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca.

The U. S . Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has the actual regulatory authority relating to the importation of live animals. Even though shippers of live animals may be enrolled in a FAST or C-TPAT program, they must still be referred to a CBP Agriculture Specialist and the USDA veterinary official as appropriate. Should you have further concerns regarding live animals, you may write to USDA, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, Maryland 20737. You are also invited to visit their Web site, at www.usda.aphis.gov.