

EXPORT OF FROZEN EQUINE SEMEN TO THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN AND EXPORTER

1. Scope

Health certificate 5945EHC may be used to accompany consignments of equine semen exported to the Republic of Tunisia and collected, processed and stored on EC approved equine semen collection centres and storage premises.

2. Certification by an Official Veterinarian (OV)

This certificate may be signed by a Local Veterinary Inspector appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Scottish Government - Rural Directorate, Welsh Government, Department For Rural Affairs) or an Authorised Veterinary Inspector (AVI) appointed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Northern Ireland (DARDNI), who is an Official Veterinarian (OV) on the appropriate panel for export purposes. OVs should sign and stamp the health certificate with the OV stamp in any colour **OTHER THAN BLACK**.

A certified copy of the completed certificate must be sent to the local Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) or Divisional Veterinary Officer in NI (DVO-NI) within seven days of issue. OVs should keep a copy for his/her own records.

3. Identification of horses

Paragraph I refers. The donor stallion must be identified. The identity of the animal must be confirmed whenever it is examined, collected from, sampled or treated. In the absence of a passport and if there is no other means of identification such as a tattoo or microchip, the OV should prepare a silhouette for use while the animal is on the collection centre. This silhouette should be retained by the OV and filed with a copy of each semen export health certificate which is issued for that animal.

4. Packing

Paragraph IV (d) refers. The exporter is responsible for provision of the tamperproof seal. The flask should be sealed under the supervision of the OV and the seal number entered at paragraph IV(d). The container holding the semen must arrive in the Republic of Tunisia with the seal intact.

5. Diseases clearance

Paragraph V (a) refers. The certification contained in this paragraph may be signed on behalf of the Department by an OV provided written authority from the DVM/DVO-NI has been received on form EC618.

Paragraph V (c) subparagraphs (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) refer. Where the certifying OV does not have personal knowledge of each of the premises at which the horse has been kept during the periods established in each subparagraph, the OV must obtain a signed declaration from the owner/s of the premises where the horse has resided, countersigned by the veterinary surgeon responsible for those premises. The declaration/s must be retained by the certifying OV for record purposes.

6. **Approval of the semen collection centre and storage facilities**

Paragraphs V (b) refers. The semen collection centre must be approved and registered by the competent authority, for the purpose of intra-Community trade in equine semen and supervised by an OV. A copy of Chapter I, Annex D laying out the conditions for the approval of the semen collection centre is attached at Appendix I. Paragraph V (b) may be certified if the conditions of Chapter I, Annex D are met and if the semen for export has been stored in facilities approved by the competent authorities. Exporters and OVs should contact the local DVM/DVO-NI for details of the procedures for approving semen collection centres and storage facilities.

The registration number of the approved semen collection centre must be inserted at paragraph III (b).

7. **Submission of samples for testing**

a) EIA and EVA testing

Paragraph V (c) (vi) refers. Samples must be sent to the VLA laboratory, Weybridge (or for semen exported from NI to the VSD Belfast) at least 14 days and not more than 30 days after collection of the semen. Original laboratory reports must be presented to the OV.

Paragraph V(c)(vi)(2) second indent refers. Before sending samples for the virus isolation test at paragraph V(c)(vi)(2) second indent, OVs are advised to contact the laboratory prior to semen collection to give advance notice of the submission and to confirm the requirements for semen packaging, transport and delivery to the laboratory. The semen sample submission must be clearly marked for "testing according to OIE with 3 x passages".

b) CEM testing

Paragraph V (c) (vii) refers. All CEM swabs must be submitted to Penrith AHVLA laboratory or VSD Belfast (from horses in Northern Ireland).

A separate swab must be taken at each of the specified swabbing sites. It is not sufficient to use one swab applied to several sites. All swabs from an individual animal must be submitted to the same laboratory. The samples must be refrigerated (**not frozen**) with a cool pack included in the parcel, and arrive at the laboratory within 48 hours of sampling. If more than 10 swabs are to be submitted, prior notice should be given to the laboratory. A separate laboratory report form must accompany each sample.

8. **Collection, processing, storage and transport of the semen**

Paragraph V (d) refers. This paragraph may be certified if the conditions of Chapter II and III of Annex D are met. A copy of Chapter II and III of Annex D of Directive 92/65/EEC is attached at Appendixes II and III.

9. **Issuing the health certificate and return a copy to the DVM**

The OV must make two photocopies of the export health certificate (EHC). The original EHC must be given to the exporter. One copy must be retained by the OV for record purposes and one copy must be returned to the DVM/DVO-NI as soon as possible after completion and no later than 7 days after the date of export.

10. **DISCLAIMER**

The DEFRA disclaimer (Form 372DMR/EC618 in NI) will be issued to the exporter with this certificate for his/her information. The certificate is provided on the basis of information available at the time and may not necessarily comply fully with the requirements of the importing country. It is the exporter's responsibility to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country. If these do not match, the exporter should contact the International Animal Health Division at the address given below.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
1A Page Street
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APPENDIX I

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/65/EEC

ANNEX D

CHAPTER I

I. *Conditions governing the approval of semen collection centres*

Semen collection centres must:

1. be placed under the supervision of a "centre veterinarian";
2. have at least
 - (a) lockable animal accommodation and if required for equidae an exercise area which are physically separated from the collection facilities, the processing and storing rooms;
 - (b) isolation facilities which have no direct communication with the normal animal accommodation;
 - (c) semen collection facilities including a separate room for the cleansing and disinfection or sterilisation of equipment;
 - (d) a semen processing room separated from the collection facilities which need not necessarily be on the same site;
 - (e) a semen storage room which need not necessarily be on the same site;
3. be so constructed or isolated that contact with outside livestock is prevented;
4. be so constructed that the entire centre except the office rooms and, in the case of equidae, the exercise area can be readily cleaned and disinfected.

II. *Conditions for the supervision of semen collection centres*

Semen collection centres must:

1. be supervised that they contain only animals of the species whose semen is to be collected;

However, other domestic animals may be admitted, provided that they present no risk of infection to those species whose semen is to be collected and they fulfil the conditions laid down by the centre veterinarian.

If in the case of equidae the collection centre shares a site with an artificial insemination or service centre, then mares, teaser stallions and stallions for natural service are admitted provided they meet the requirements of Annex D Chapter II paragraph A(1), (2), (3) and (4);
2. be monitored to ensure that records are kept which show:
 - the species, breed, date of birth and identification of each animal present in the centre,
 - any movement of animals entering or leaving the centre,
 - the health history and all diagnostic tests and the results thereof, treatments and vaccinations carried out on animals kept,
 - the date of collecting and processing semen,
 - the destination of semen,
 - the storage of semen;
3. be inspected by an OV during the breeding season at least once a year in the case of animals with seasonal breeding and twice a year in the case of non-seasonal reproduction in order to consider and verify all matters relating to the conditions of approval and supervision;

4. be so supervised that the entry of unauthorised persons is prevented. Furthermore, authorised visitors must be required to comply with the conditions laid down by the centre veterinarian;
 5. employ competent staff who have received adequate training on disinfection and hygiene techniques to prevent the spread of disease;
 6. be monitored to ensure that:
 - none of the animals kept in the centre is used for natural breeding at least 30 days prior to first semen collection and during the collection period,
 - the collection, processing and storage of semen is carried out only in premises set aside for these purposes,
 - all utensils coming into contact with the semen or the donor animal during collection or processing are either properly disinfected or sterilised prior to use or new, disposable and discarded after use,

If, in the case of equidae, the collection centre shares a site with an artificial insemination centre or a service centre, there must be a strict separation between instruments and equipment for artificial insemination or natural service and instruments and equipment coming into contact with donor animals or other animals kept in the collection centre and the semen.
 - products of animal origin such as diluents, additives or extenders are used in the processing of the semen, which present no animal health risk or which have undergone prior treatment to preclude such risk,
 - in the case of frozen or chilled semen cryogenic agents are used, which had not been used previously for other products of animal origin,
 - any receptacle for the storage or transport of semen is either disinfected or sterilised as appropriate prior to use or new, disposable and discarded after use;
 7. ensure that each individual dose of semen is indelibly identified in such a way that the Member State of origin, date of collection, the species, the breed, the identity of the donor animal and the name and/or number of the approved centre which collected the semen may be established.
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APPENDIX II

CHAPTER II

Conditions applicable in collection centres

Requirements as regards the admission of donor males

A. STALLIONS

Only a stallion which to the satisfaction of the centre veterinarian meets the following requirements may be used for the collection of semen:

1. it must not show any sign of an infectious or contagious disease at the time of admission and on the day the semen is collected;
2. it must come from the territory or, in the case of regionalization, from the part of the territory of a Member State or a third country and from a holding under veterinary supervision each of which satisfy the requirements of Council Directive 90/426/EEC;
3. it must have been kept for 30 days prior to semen collection in holdings where no equine has shown any clinical sign of equine viral arteritis during that period;
4. it must have been kept for 60 days prior to semen collection in holdings where no equine has shown any clinical sign of contagious equine metritis during that period;
5. it must not be used for natural mating during 30 days prior to the first semen collection and during the collection period;
6. it must be subjected to the following tests, carried out and certified in a laboratory recognized by the competent authority according to the programme set up in paragraph 7:
 - (i) an agar-gel immuno-diffusion test (Coggins test) for equine infectious anaemia with negative result;
 - (ii) a serum neutralization test for equine viral arteritis. Unless a negative result at a serum dilution of 1 in 4 is achieved, a virus isolation test for equine viral arteritis shall be carried out with negative result on an aliquot of the entire semen of the donor stallion;
 - (iii) a test for contagious equine metritis carried out on two occasions with an interval of seven days by isolation of *Taylorella equigenitalis* from pre-ejaculatory fluid or a semen sample and from genital swabs taken at least from the penile sheath, urethra and urethral fossa with negative result in each case;
7. it must have been subjected to one of the following testing programmes:
 - (i) Where semen is collected for trade in fresh or chilled semen:
 - and the donor stallion is continuously resident on the collection centre for at least 30 days prior to the first semen collection and during the collection period, and no equidae on the collection centre come into direct contact with equidae of lower health status than the donor stallion, the tests required in paragraphs 6 (i), (ii) and (iii) shall be carried out at least 14 days after the start of the above residence period and at least once a year at the beginning of the breeding season.
 - and the donor stallion is not continuously resident on the collection centre, and/or other equidae on the collection centre come into direct contact with equidae of lower health status, the tests required in paragraphs 6 (i), (ii) and (iii) shall be carried out within the 14 day period before the first semen collection and at least once a year at the beginning of the breeding season. Furthermore, the test required in paragraph 6 (i) shall be repeated at least every 120 days during the period of semen collection. The test required in paragraph 6 (ii) shall be carried out not more than 30 days before each semen collection, unless the non-shedder state of a seropositive stallion for equine viral arteritis is confirmed by virus isolation test which must be carried out annually.
 - (ii) Where semen is collected for trade in frozen semen, the testing programmes as described in paragraph 7 (i) first and second indent shall apply or, alternatively, the tests required in paragraph 6 (i),

(ii) and (iii) shall be carried out during the mandatory 30 days storage period of the semen and not less than 14 days after the collection of the semen, irrespective of the residence status of the stallion.

C. If any of the tests referred to in A or B proves positive, that animal must be isolated and the semen, collected from it since the last negative test shall not be subject of trade. The same applies to semen collected from the other animals susceptible to the disease concerned at the holding or collection centre since the date on which the positive test was carried out. Trade shall not resume until the health status of the centre has been re-established.

APPENDIX III

CHAPTER III

REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO SEMEN, OVA AND EMBRYOS

Semen, ova and embryos must have been collected, processed and preserved in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) The washing of ova and embryos even in the case of equidae must be carried out in accordance with conditions to be laid down in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 26. Pending the adoption of such condition, international standards are applicable.

The zona pellucida of ova and embryos must remain intact before and after washing.

Only ova and embryos from the same donor may be washed at the same time.

After washing, the zona pellucida of each ovum or embryo must be examined over its entire surface area under a magnification of at least 50 and be certified as being intact and free from any adherent material.

- (b) The medium and solutions used for collection, processing (examination, washing and treatment), conservation or freezing of ova and embryos must be sterilised in accordance with approved methods and handled in such a way that they remain sterile.

Antibiotics must be added to the collection, washing and conservation mediums for ova and embryos and to the diluents for semen. If necessary detailed rules will be determined under the procedure provided for in Article 26.

- (c) All materials used for the collection, processing, conservation or freezing of semen, ova and embryos must be either disinfected or sterilised as appropriate before use or new, disposable and discarded after use.

- (d) Additional tests may be established under the procedure provided for in Article 26, in particular as regards the collection of washing liquids, so as to establish that no pathogens are present.

- (e) Ova and embryos, which have successfully undergone the examination provided for in (a), and semen shall be placed in sterile containers, which are duly identified, contain only products from one male or female donor and are sealed immediately.

The identification to be established under the procedure provided for in Article 26 shall ensure that at least the country of origin, the date of collection, the species, the breed, the identity of the donor animal and the name and/or the number of the collection centre/team may be established.

- (f) Frozen semen, ova and embryos must be placed in sterile liquid nitrogen containers which present no risk of contamination to the product.

- (g) Frozen semen, ova and embryos must be stored in approved conditions for a minimum period of 30 days prior to dispatch.

- (h) Semen, ova and embryos must be transported in containers which either have been cleaned, disinfected or sterilised as appropriate before use or are new, disposable and discarded after use.