



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment

Approved export program guidelines for the export of livestock



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Warning

This document is intended as guidance only.

Contact us

For information about AEPs, contact the Live Animal Exports Branch on (02) 6272 4581 or livestockexp@awe.gov.au.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
approved arrangement (AA)	<p>An arrangement entered into by an exporter that prescribes the processes and practices that will be undertaken by the exporter to meet relevant importing country, legislative and departmental compliance requirements for the export of livestock.</p> <p>An AA is approved under the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004.</p>
Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV)	<p>A veterinarian who is accredited under the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004 to undertake approved export programs. AAVs may be accredited to provide pre-export preparation services or shipboard services or both in relation to approved export programs.</p>
approved export program (AEP)	<p>An exporter's program of activities, approved by the Secretary, for Australian Government Accredited Veterinarians (AAVs) preparing livestock consignments for export by sea or air, or accompanying livestock consignments on voyages.</p>
Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL)	<p>The standards set the minimum animal health and welfare requirements the livestock export industry must meet throughout the supply chain, from sourcing to completion of disembarkation overseas.</p> <p>The standards are enforceable under the Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry (Standards) Order 2005, made under section 17 of the <i>Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997</i>.</p> <p>ASEL 2.3 is in force until 31 October 2020. On or after 1 November 2020, it will transition to ASEL 3.0.</p>
class	<p>The export grouping of animals based on their end use: breeder, feeder or slaughter. The term breeder includes any subsets of this class such as productive heifers.</p>
export advisory notice (EAN)	<p>A notice from the department to industry stakeholders of the livestock supply chain. EANs are published on the department's website and include information that industry should be aware of, including changes to regulations, policies and administrative arrangements.</p>
exporter	<p>A holder of a livestock export licence under the <i>Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997</i>. An exporter can be an individual, business or organisation.</p>
export licence	<p>Licence to export livestock granted by the Secretary or their delegate following the satisfaction of certain criteria and in accordance with the <i>Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997</i>.</p>
importing country requirements	<p>Requirements set by a government body of an importing country that must be met in order for a product to be imported into that country.</p>
livestock	<p>Livestock, as defined in the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004, means cattle, sheep, goats, deer, buffalo and camelids (camels, llamas, alpacas and vicuñas), and includes the young of an animal of any of those kinds.</p>
Manual of Importing Country Requirements (MICO)	<p>An online database that exporters can use to obtain guidance on importing country requirements for livestock.</p>
standard export plan (SEP)	<p>A subsection of an approved arrangement that includes a detailed plan showing how an exporter will meet all relevant Australian Government legislation, standards and importing country requirements for the market, species, class and mode of transport relevant to that exporter.</p> <p>A standard export plan must be approved by the department prior to the approval of a consignment's notice of intention to export livestock (NOI).</p>

Approved export program guidelines

1.1 Purpose and scope

These guidelines are designed to help livestock exporters draft and vary an approved export program (AEP).

The guidelines apply only to exporters of livestock. They do not apply to exporters of other animals or reproductive material.

Read these guidelines in conjunction with relevant export legislation and standards listed under [Related documents](#).

1.2 Difference between approved export program and approved arrangement

In subsection 9A(2) of the *Export Control Act 1982*, an AEP is defined as a program of activities to be undertaken by an Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) for the purpose of ensuring the health and welfare of livestock in the course of export activities. An AEP contains instructions to AAVs who are preparing livestock for export and, where relevant, accompanying livestock on sea voyages.

In division 1A.2 of the *Export Control (Animals) Order 2004*, an approved arrangement (AA) covers each step of the preparation of livestock for export. Acting in accordance with an AA ensures compliance with relevant legislation, standards and importing country requirements, and provides a sound basis for the department to issue an export permit and health certificate for the livestock.

The key difference between an AA and an AEP is that an AEP should only include activities that must be undertaken by an AAV. This is because either the importing country requirements or the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) state that an activity must be undertaken by an AAV. Activities that do not have to be undertaken by an AAV should be included in an AA.

1.3 Structure of approved export program

In the same way an exporter has one AA, an exporter will only have one AEP. An exporter's single AEP must contain AAV instructions for preparing each kind and class of livestock, each mode of transport and each market that the exporter wishes to export to. Where relevant, an exporter's AEP must also contain instructions to AAVs accompanying livestock by sea.

To make an AEP easier to read and to comply with, the department suggests exporters divide their AEP into 3 parts:

- 1) Governance
- 2) Land-based AAV instructions
- 3) Shipboard AAV instructions (where relevant).

1.3.1 Governance

The governance part of an AEP should include the exporter's name, licence number and AEP version number.

This part should also include a procedure for keeping records that demonstrate the implementation of the AEP.

1.3.2 Land-based AAV instructions

These contain an exporter's instructions to land-based AAVs about pre-export activities that must be undertaken by an AAV. This will generally consist of a number of sets of land-based AAV instructions that differ depending on the importing country, the kind or class of livestock or the mode of transport.

For example, an exporter that exports feeder buffalo and feeder cattle to Indonesia could have a set of land-based AAV instructions to prepare feeder cattle for export by sea to Indonesia and a separate set of instructions for feeder buffalo for export by sea to Indonesia. Alternatively, an exporter's AEP could include a combined set of land-based AAV instructions for both species for export to Indonesia by sea.

Where the importing country or ASEL requirements differ for different kinds or classes of livestock, we recommend that exporters develop separate land-based AAV instructions. A benefit of this approach is that a set of land-based AAV instructions can be developed to correspond to each standard export plan (SEP) in an exporter's AA. For more information on SEPs, see [Approved arrangement guidelines](#).

Each set of land-based AAV instructions should only include pre-export activities that an AAV must undertake. Pre-export activities that do not require an AAV but could be done by an AAV in their capacity as a registered veterinarian should be included in a SEP. For example, activities required by the importing country or ASEL to be performed by a registered veterinarian before livestock enters a registered premises or pre-export quarantine or isolation.

To determine which activities must be undertaken by an AAV, exporters should use the relevant importing country requirements (ICR) in [MICO](#) or the import permit to identify:

- activities that must be undertaken by an AAV (where the ICRs specify that an activity may be implemented under the supervision of an AAV, this can be reflected in the land-based AAV instructions. Where the ICRs refer to a government-approved or accredited veterinarian this should be interpreted as an AAV.)
- examinations, testing and treatments that must be undertaken in a registered premises or while livestock are being held in pre-export quarantine or isolation.

Land-based AAV instructions must also include:

- the ASEL requirement for an AAV to conduct the final individual animal examination before export
- the types of records the AAV must provide to the exporter to demonstrate completion of each activity (see [Record-keeping requirements](#))

- a statement that indicates the exporter will discuss the activities with the AAV before the AAV commences work.

Land-based AAV instructions must clearly identify which actions an AAV must undertake. For example, where applicable, the instructions should specify what must be done, where it must be done, and how and when it must be done.

A land-based AAV instruction template with guidance notes is at [Appendix A](#). We are also publishing pre-filled land-based AAV instructions on MCoR for many of the major markets. Exporters can download these pre-filled templates and fill in their specific details or check their current land-based AAV instructions against them.

Record-keeping requirements

AAVs are required to keep records as part of their accreditation as an AAV, as set out in section 4A.14 of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004. These records could be used by an exporter to demonstrate completion of each activity within a set of land-based AAV instructions.

Exporters could also consider requiring AAVs to provide other record types, such as photographs, videos and declarations, which would enable the AAV to demonstrate they have completed the activities.

1.3.3 Shipboard AAV instructions

These instructions contain an exporter's instructions to a shipboard AAV in situations where an AAV is required to accompany livestock on an export voyage by sea. Generally, exporters will only need to prepare one set of shipboard AAV instructions because the activities required of an AAV are usually the same for all importing countries and kinds or classes of livestock.

Activities to be included in shipboard AAV instructions are largely determined by ASEL. The standard specifies several activities that must be done by an AAV on board a vessel. These activities include:

- remaining with the consignment until the vessel has completed discharge at the final port of discharge
- providing the daily and end-of-voyage reports to the department. These activities are also required by section 4A.15 of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004.

Other activities that must be included in the shipboard AAV instructions include:

- activities to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock during the voyage (these could include the ASEL requirements that can be performed by either a stockperson or AAV)
- the types of records, in addition to the daily and end-of-voyage reports, the AAV must provide to the exporter to demonstrate completion of each activity
- a statement that indicates that before the voyage the exporter will provide the AAV with relevant documents and consignment-specific information such as load plans, management plans, contingency plans, details of bedding and fodder loaded, and veterinary drug and equipment inventories
- a statement that indicates the exporter will discuss the shipboard AAV instructions with the AAV before the voyage.

As with land-based AAV instructions, shipboard AAV instructions must clearly identify which activities an AAV must undertake. Simply stating that an AAV will meet a particular ASEL requirement is not sufficient. The instructions must specify the type of activity and how it will meet an ASEL requirement.

A shipboard AAV instruction template with guidance notes is at [Appendix B](#).

1.4 Application process

There are 3 ways an exporter can apply to the department to have an AEP approved:

- 1) Make an application for a new AEP
- 2) Make an application to vary an AEP
- 3) By complying with a notice from the department to vary an AEP.

1.4.1 Applying for a new approved export program

Generally only new exporters have to apply for a new AEP. Existing exporters wanting to make changes to their AEP will have to apply to vary their AEP (see [section 1.4.2 Applying for a variation](#)).

Exporters applying for a new AEP must do so under subsection 1A.35(1)(b) of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004. Applications for a new AEP must be made in writing and should be emailed to livestockexp@awe.gov.au.

Applicants must include:

- a draft AEP
- a completed [AEP application form](#)
- the exporter's AA (for new exporters, a draft AEP and draft AA will be assessed together).

The Secretary or their delegate will approve the AEP if they are satisfied that it is for the purpose of ensuring the health and welfare of each kind or class of livestock in the course of export activities that the application relates to.

The department may request additional information from the exporter for the purpose of making a decision about the application. If we request additional information, we will extend the time frame for making the decision. The time frame will be extended by the number of days it takes for an exporter to comply with the request.

If the delegate approves the draft AEP, they must give the exporter a written notice stating:

- the day the AEP takes effect
- and either
 - that the AEP remains in force unless it is suspended or cancelled, or
 - if applicable, the expiry date for the AEP.

If the delegate decides not to approve the AEP, they must give the exporter a written notice setting out:

- the reasons for the decision
- the exporter's right to apply for reconsideration of the decision.

If the department does not make a decision about an AEP application within 60 days, the department is taken to have decided not to approve the AEP. The exporter then has the right to apply to the Secretary for reconsideration of the decision. The exporter is also entitled to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for review of the decision.

1.4.2 Applying for a variation

Exporters may apply to vary an AEP by submitting an application under subsection 1A.38(1) of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004. Applications to vary an AEP must be made in writing and should be emailed to livestockexp@awe.gov.au.

Applicants must include:

- a covering email that clearly describes the proposed changes. For example, 'adding land-based AAV instructions for the following [market], [species], [class] and [mode of transport]'
- the proposed AEP variation
- the corresponding SEPs that the proposed AEP variation relates to.

The Secretary or their delegate will approve a variation of an AEP if they are satisfied that the proposed variation will ensure the health and welfare of each kind or class of livestock in the course of export activities that the application relates to.

The department may request additional information from the exporter for the purpose of making a decision about the application. If we request additional information, we will extend the time frame for making the decision. The time frame will be extended by the number of days it takes for an exporter to comply with the request.

If the delegate approves a variation, they must give the exporter a written notice stating:

- details of the variation
- the day the variation takes effect.

If the delegate decides not to approve a variation, they must give the exporter a written notice setting out:

- the reasons for the decision
- the exporter's right to apply for reconsideration of the decision.

If the department does not make a decision about an AEP variation application within 60 days, the department is taken to have decided not to approve the variation. The exporter then has the right to apply to the Secretary for reconsideration of the decision. The exporter is also entitled to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for review of the decision.

1.4.3 Complying with a notice to vary an AEP

Under subsection 1A.39(1) of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004, the department can issue a notice requiring exporters to vary their AEP.

The notice will identify (in general or specific terms) the variation required and require the exporter to give the varied AEP to the department within a specified period.

To comply with the notice, exporters must email livestockexp@awe.gov.au with their varied AEP within the specified period.

Once the exporter has complied with the notice, the department will give the exporter a written notice approving the varied AEP. The notice must state the day the varied AEP takes effect.

1.5 Key policy and guidelines

- *Approved export program guidelines for the export of livestock*
- [Approved arrangement guidelines for the export of livestock](#)

1.6 Related documents

- *Export Control Act 1982*
- *Export Control (Animals) Order 2004*
- *Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Act 1997*
- *Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry (Export Licensing) Regulations 1998*
- [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock \(ASEL\)](#)
- [Manual of Importing Country Requirements](#) (MICoR)
- [Export advisory notices](#)

Appendix A: Land-based AAV instructions template

This template is a guide to help exporters develop land-based instructions for Australian Government Accredited Veterinarians (AAVs) as part of an AEP. The template is an example only.

If using this template, exporters should complete [section 1](#) and [section 3](#) before submitting the land-based AAV instructions to the department for approval. Exporters should complete [section 2](#) for each consignment before providing the land-based instructions to an AAV. The instruction text in italics should be deleted once you have completed the template.

Approved export program: Land-based AAV instructions

Section 1 Market, species, class and transport method

Importing country	<i>[insert text]</i>
Species	<i>[insert text]</i>
Class (e.g. breeder, feeder or slaughter)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Transport method (sea or air)	<i>[insert text]</i>

Section 2 Consignment description

LNCs:	<i>[insert text]</i>
Consignment details (approx. no., other relevant characteristics such as gender, breed, age, etc.)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Name of registered premises, approved premises or premises	<i>[insert text]</i>
Vessel name or flight details:	<i>[insert text]</i>
Port of loading	<i>[insert text]</i>
Estimated departure date (dd/mm/yy)	<i>[insert text]</i>

AAV names _____

Accreditation number _____

Section 3 AAV instructions

Activities	Time frames	Records
<i>[Insert all activities to be undertaken by the AAV in accordance with importing country requirements. Insert new rows for each separate activity Number each activity]</i>	<i>State as per importing country requirements</i>	<i>e.g. Treatment record</i>
<p><i>[#]. At registered premises, approved premises or premises, examine all livestock. Identify rejects and those that display any symptoms identified in the ASEL rejection criteria (attach the rejection criteria for ease of reference), including those that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• have visible evidence of external parasites</i> <i>• show signs of contagious or infectious disease</i> <i>• are not fit to travel.</i> <p><i>Ensure that rejects are separated from the consignment and are visually identifiable (e.g. ear tags and/or spray marks).</i></p>	<i>State as per ASEL and importing country requirements</i>	<i>e.g. Inspection record</i>

Completion of program

Sign and date this document and attach the records required for activities listed in [section 3](#) and provide to *[exporter contact details]*.

The AAV must keep their own records as required by section 4A.14 of the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004

Exporter declaration

I have discussed the activities described in [section 3](#) with the AAV before they commenced the activities.

Exporter name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Signature _____

AAV declaration

I declare I have completed the activities as described in [section 3](#).

AAV name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Signature _____

Appendix B: Shipboard AAV instructions template

This template is a guide to help exporters develop shipboard instructions for Australian Government Accredited Veterinarians (AAVs) as part of an AEP. The template is an example only.

If using this template, where an exporter intends to have a single set of shipboard instructions, they should leave [section 1](#) blank and complete [section 2](#) before submitting the shipboard AAV instructions to the department for approval. Where an exporter intends to have multiple sets of shipboard instructions for different destinations, species or classes, they should complete the relevant rows of [section 1](#) and complete [section 2](#) prior to submitting to the department for approval (and repeat the process for the subsequent sets of shipboard instructions).

Once approved, the blank rows of [section 1](#) should be completed for each consignment before providing the shipboard instructions to the AAV.

The instruction text in italics should be deleted once you have completed the template.

Approved export program: Shipboard AAV instructions

Section 1 Consignment description

Importing country	<i>[insert text]</i>
Class (e.g. breeder, feeder or slaughter)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Species	<i>[insert text]</i>
LNCs	<i>[insert text]</i>
Consignment details (approximate no., breed, etc.)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Vessel name	<i>[insert text]</i>
Port of loading	<i>[insert text]</i>
Estimated departure date (dd/mm/yy)	<i>[insert text]</i>

AAV names _____

Accreditation number _____

Section 2 AAV instructions

Activities	Time frames	Records
Remain with consignment until vessel has completed discharge at final port of discharge. If you are asked to leave the vessel before the last animal has	<i>[insert text]</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>

Activities	Time frames	Records
unloaded you must inform <i>[exporter contact details]</i> and the department as soon as practicable.		
Ensure <i>[exporter contact details]</i> has provided a copy of the load plan, voyage route, final weights, class and type of livestock loaded, details of fodder and bedding loaded, details of any livestock health issues identified during preparation and how addressed; and list of veterinary drugs and equipment on the vessel.	Prior to boarding	<i>[insert text]</i>
Advise <i>[exporter contact details]</i> if additional veterinary equipment or drugs are required before voyage starts.	Prior to boarding	<i>[insert text]</i>
Ensure you have read and discussed with the <i>[exporter contact details]</i> any relevant management plans and contingency plans.	Prior to boarding	<i>[insert text]</i>
Provide the daily reports to the department.	Within 24 hours of the reporting day, commencing on the day the first animal is loaded and until the last animal is unloaded	Daily report
Provide the end-of-voyage report to the department.	Within 5 days of completion of unloading at the final port of disembarkation	End-of-voyage report
<i>[Insert activities to be undertaken by the AAV to ensure the health and welfare of livestock during the voyage. These could include activities to meet ASEL requirements that can be performed by either a stockperson or AAV. Including these activities in an AEP will mean that the activities must be done by the AAV. Simply stating that an AAV will meet ASEL requirements will not be sufficient. The activity must specify what and importantly how an ASEL requirement will be met.]</i> <i>[Add new rows for each separate activity.]</i>	<i>Specify frequency, e.g. daily</i>	<i>e.g. Treatment record</i>

Completion of program

Sign and date this document and attach the records required for activities listed in [section 2](#) and provide to *[exporter contact details]*. Present all records listed within 5 days of completion of unloading at the final port of disembarkation.

Exporter declaration

I have discussed the activities described in [section 2](#) with the AAV before they commenced the activities.

Exporter name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Signature _____

AAV declaration

I declare I have completed the activities as described in [section 2](#).

AAV name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Signature _____