



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Approved export program guidelines for the export of livestock

Live Animal Export Branch

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Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone 1800 900 090

Web [agriculture.gov.au](https://www.agriculture.gov.au)

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

Contents

Glossary.....	4
1 Approved export program guidelines.....	5
1.1 Purpose and scope	5
1.2 Difference between an AEP and an AA	5
1.3 Structure of an AEP	5
1.4 Application process	8
1.5 Key policy and guidelines	10
1.6 Related information	10
Appendix A: Land-based AAV instructions template	11
Approved export program: Land-based AAV instructions.....	11
Attachment B: Shipboard AAV instructions template	13
Approved export program: Shipboard AAV instructions.....	13
Document Control	15

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) Rules 2021</p>
accredited veterinarian (AAV)	<p>A veterinarian who is accredited under the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021 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 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 Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) set the minimum animal health and welfare standards exporters must meet throughout the export supply chain.</p> <p>ASEL is given effect under the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i> and is referenced in the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021. Exporters must comply with ASEL to be permitted to export livestock from Australia.</p> <p>ASEL applies to exports of cattle, sheep, goats, buffalo, deer, and camelids.</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 external stakeholders containing point in time information relating to live animal exports. This may include website links to new or updated policies, or advice relating to a consultation process.</p>
exporter	<p>A holder of a livestock export licence under the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i>. An exporter can be an individual, business or organisation.</p>
export licence	<p>A licence to export livestock granted by the Secretary or their delegate following the satisfaction of certain criteria and in accordance with the <i>Export Control Act 2020</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) Rules 2021, means cattle, sheep, goats, deer, buffalo and camelids (camels, llamas and alpacas), and includes the young of an animal of any of those kinds.</p>
manual of importing country requirements (Micor)	<p>An online database that exporters can use to obtain guidance on importing country requirements for livestock.</p> <p>See the manual of importing country requirements.</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>

1 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 are only relevant 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 an AEP and an AA

An AEP is defined as a program of activities to be undertaken by an 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. AEPs are approved under section 311 of the *Export Control Act 2020* (the Act).

In chapter 5 part 2 of the Act, an approved arrangement (AA) covers each step of the preparation of livestock for export. Acting in accordance with an AA facilitates 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 an AEP

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 class and species 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. Part of this must include a procedure for ensuring that a copy of the parts of the AEP relevant to each consignment is provided to the AAV.

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 class and species 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 classes or species 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. Read more about SEPs in the [AA 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 establishment or a pre-export quarantine or isolation premises.

To determine which activities must be undertaken by an AAV, exporters should use the relevant importing country requirements (ICR) in [Micor](#) 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 establishment 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 (read more about [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, 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](#). Pre-filled land-based AAV instructions are available on [Micor](#) 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 9-26 of the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021 (Animals Rules). 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.

AAVs must keep a record that they have received a copy of the relevant parts of the AEP for the particular consignment related to the activities to be undertaken by that AAV.

1.3.3 Shipboard AAV instructions

Shipboard AAV instructions contain an exporter's instructions to a shipboard AAV in circumstances 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 classes or species of livestock.

Activities to be included in shipboard AAV instructions are largely determined by ASEL. ASEL 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 disembarkation
- providing the daily and end-of-voyage reports to the department. These activities are also required by section 6-6(2) of the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021.

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 feed 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 AEP

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](#).

Exporters applying for a new AEP must do so under subsection 9-33 of the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021.

Applications for a new AEP must be made in writing and should:

- use the [application for a new livestock export licence, approved arrangement, or approved export program](#) form, with relevant sections filled in
- include the proposed export program and all supporting documents
- be emailed to livestockexp@aff.gov.au once completed.

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 class or species of livestock in the course of export activities that the application relates to.

When assessing your application, the department may request further information for the purpose of making a decision about the application. While this information is being provided, the clock used to measure against will pause, and recommence once the information is received

Read more about the [client service standards](#) for AEPs.

If the delegate approves the proposed export program, 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 120 calendar days (or an extended period if further information is requested from the applicant), 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 to an AEP

The holder of an AEP may apply to vary an AEP under section 9-36 of the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021.

Applications to vary an AEP must be made in writing and should:

- use the [application to vary a livestock export licence, approved arrangement, or approved export program](#) form, with relevant sections filled in
- include a summary of the proposed changes (for example, 'adding land based AAV instructions for [market], [species], [class] and [mode of transport]')
- include the corresponding SEPs, AAV instructions and any other documentation that the proposed AEP variation relates to
- be emailed to livestockexp@aff.gov.au once completed.

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 class or species of livestock in the course of export activities that the application relates to.

When assessing your application, the department may request further information for the purpose of making a decision about the application. While this information is being provided, the clock used to measure against will pause, and recommence once the information is received. The time frame will be extended by the number of days it takes for an exporter to comply with the request.

Read more about the [client service standards](#) for AEPs.

If the delegate approves a variation, they must give the exporter holder of the AEP 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 holder of the AEP 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 120 calendar days (or an extended period if further information is requested from the applicant), the department is taken to have decided not to approve the variation. The holder of the AEP 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 section 9-46 of the Animals Rules, 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@aff.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 will state the date the varied AEP takes effect.

1.5 Key policy and guidelines

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

1.6 Related information

- [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock \(ASEL\)](#)
- [Become a livestock exporter](#)
- [Client service standards](#)
- [Export Control \(Animals\) Rules 2021](#)
- [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- [Form for exporting livestock](#)
- [Manual of importing country requirements \(Micor\)](#)
- [Reforming live animal exports](#)
- [Regulating live animal exports](#)
- [Roles and responsibilities of Accredited Veterinarians \(AAVs\)](#)
- [Voyage reporting requirements under ASEL](#)

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 mode

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

Section 2 Consignment description

LNC:	<i>[insert text]</i>
Consignment details (approx. no., other relevant characteristics such as gender, breed, age, etc.)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Name of registered establishment, approved premises or other 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 name: _____

AAV accreditation number: _____

Section 3 AAV instructions

Activities	Time frames	Records
<p><i>[Insert all activities to be undertaken by the AAV in accordance with importing country requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Insert new rows for each separate activity</i></p> <p><i>Number each activity]</i></p>	<p><i>State as per importing country requirements</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. Treatment record</i></p>
<p><i>[#]. At registered establishment, approved premises or other 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"> • have visible evidence of external parasites • show signs of contagious or infectious disease • are not fit to travel. <p><i>Ensure that rejects are separated from the consignment and are visually identifiable (e.g. ear tags and/or spray marks).</i></p>	<p><i>State as per ASEL and importing country requirements</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. Inspection record</i></p>

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 9-26 of the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021.

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 _____

Attachment B: Shipboard AAV instructions template

This template is a guide to help exporters develop shipboard instructions for 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 details

Importing country	<i>[insert text]</i>
Class (e.g. breeder, feeder or slaughter)	<i>[insert text]</i>
Species	<i>[insert text]</i>
LNC	<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 name _____

AAV accreditation number _____

Section 2 AAV instructions

Activities	Time frames	Records
<i>Remain with consignment until vessel has completed discharge at final port of disembarkation. If you are asked to leave the vessel before the last animal has unloaded you must inform [exporter contact details] and the department as soon as practicable.</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>
<i>Ensure [exporter contact details] has provided a copy of the load plan, voyage route, final weights, class and type of livestock loaded,</i>	<i>Prior to boarding</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>

Activities	Time frames	Records
<i>details of feed 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.</i>		
<i>Advise [exporter contact details] if additional veterinary equipment or drugs are required before voyage starts.</i>	<i>Prior to boarding</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>
<i>Ensure you have read and discussed with the [exporter contact details] any relevant management plans and contingency plans.</i>	<i>Prior to boarding</i>	<i>[insert text]</i>
<i>Provide the daily reports to the department.</i>	<i>Within 24 hours of the reporting day, commencing on the day the first animal is loaded and until the last animal is unloaded</i>	<i>Daily report</i>
<i>Provide the end-of-voyage report to the department.</i>	<i>Within 5 days of completion of unloading at the final port of disembarkation</i>	<i>End-of-voyage report</i>
<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 _____

Document Control

The AEP guidelines for the export of livestock is maintained by the Live Animal Export Branch.

Version	Date of issue	Author	Reason for change
1.0	2018	Live Animal Export Branch	First publication due to introduction of approved export programs
2.0	2020	Live Animal Export Branch	Updated guidelines
3.0	December 2023	Live Animal Export Branch	Inserted new record keeping requirements as per recent amendments to the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021. Updated document template, department branding, minor formatting, and legislative references and wording to ensure consistency with current legislation. Updates to reflect ASEL 3.3.