

Description of Respondents: State, Local or Tribal Government.
Number of Respondents: 10.
Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.
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Ruth Brown,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0098]

Notice of Availability of an Evaluation of the Classical Swine Fever and Swine Vesicular Disease Status of Japan

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we are proposing to recognize Japan as being free of classical swine fever and swine vesicular disease. This proposed recognition is based on a risk evaluation we have prepared in connection with this action, which we are making available for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before March 22, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0098>.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2017-0098, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0098> or in our reading room, which is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 799-7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Kelly Rhodes, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Regionalization Evaluation Services, National Import Export Services, VS, APHIS, USDA, 4700 River Road Unit 38,

Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; email: Kelly.Rhodes@aphis.usda.gov; (301) 851-3315.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 9 CFR part 94 (referred to below as the regulations) govern the importation of certain animals and animal products into the United States in order to prevent the introduction of various animal diseases, including classical swine fever (CSF) and swine vesicular disease (SVD). These are dangerous and communicable diseases of swine.

Within part 94, § 94.9 contains requirements governing the importation of pork and pork products from regions where CSF exists. Section 94.10 contains importation requirements for swine from regions where CSF is considered to exist. Section 94.12 contains requirements governing the importation of pork or pork products from regions where SVD exists. Section 94.14 prohibits the importation of domestic swine which are moved from or transit any region in which SVD is known to exist.

In accordance with §§ 94.9(a)(1) and 94.10(a)(1), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) maintains a web-based list of regions which the Agency considers free of CSF. Sections 94.9(a)(2) and 94.10(a)(2) state that APHIS will add a region to this list after it conducts an evaluation of the region and finds that CSF is not present.

Similarly, in accordance with § 94.12(a)(1), APHIS maintains a web-based list of regions which the Agency considers free of SVD. Paragraph (a)(2) of this section states that APHIS will add a region to this list after it conducts an evaluation of the region and finds that SVD is not present.

The regulations in § 92.2 contain requirements for requesting the recognition of the animal health status of a region (as well as for the approval of the export of a particular type of animal or animal product to the United States from a foreign region). If, after review and evaluation of the information submitted in support of the request, APHIS believes the request can be safely granted, APHIS will make its evaluation available for public comment through a document published in the **Federal Register**. Following the close of the comment period, APHIS will review all comments received and will make a final determination regarding the request that will be detailed in another document published in the **Federal Register**.

The Government of Japan has requested that APHIS evaluate the CSF and SVD disease status of the country.

In response to Japan's request, we have prepared an evaluation, titled "APHIS Evaluation of the Classical Swine Fever and Swine Vesicular Disease Status of Japan" (September 2017). Based on the evaluation, we have determined that Japan is free of both CSF and SVD. APHIS has also determined that the surveillance, prevention, and control measures implemented by Japan are sufficient to minimize the likelihood of introducing CSF and SVD into the United States via imports of species or products susceptible to these diseases. Our determination supports adding Japan to the web-based lists of regions which APHIS considers free of CSF and SVD.

Therefore, in accordance with § 92.2(e), we are announcing the availability of our evaluation of the CSF and SVD status of Japan for public review and comment. We are also announcing the availability of an environmental assessment (EA), which has been prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provision of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372). The evaluation and EA may be viewed on the *Regulations.gov* website or in our reading room. (Instructions for accessing *Regulations.gov* and information on the location and hours of the reading room are provided under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice.) The documents are also available by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Information submitted in support of Japan's request is available by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

After reviewing any comments we receive, we will announce our decision regarding the disease status of Japan with respect to CSF and SVD in a subsequent notice.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 450, 7701-7772, 7781-7786, and 8301-8317; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

Done in Washington, DC, this 14th day of February 2018.

Kevin Shea,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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