



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE  
Veterinary Services  
(USDA APHIS VS)**

**Aquatic Animal Health Overview**

*USDA APHIS VS (VS) is the competent authority for the protection, inspection, and certification of aquatic animal health. The Deputy Administrator of VS is the Chief Veterinary Officer for the United States and is the delegate to the World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH).*

This authority is provided by the following codes and regulations:

**Animal Health Protection Act (7 USC 8301 – 8322 et. seq.)** The AHPA was enacted to prevent, detect, control, or eradicate diseases of farmed animals including aquaculture species and promoting species specific best management practices. This law and associated penalties can be found online at [7 USC Ch. 109: ANIMAL HEALTH PROTECTION \(house.gov\)](https://www.congress.gov/collections/topic/109)

**Virus Serum Toxin Act (21 USC 151-159 et. seq.)** The VSTA was enacted to ensure that pure, safe, potent, and effective biologic products are available for sale and distribution in the United States for use in animals. This law and associated penalties can be found online at [U.S.C. Title 21 - FOOD AND DRUGS \(govinfo.gov\)](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USC/title-21)

**9 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR): Animal and Animal Products** – Specific implementing regulations and requirements promulgated under these statutes related to aquatic animal health activities:

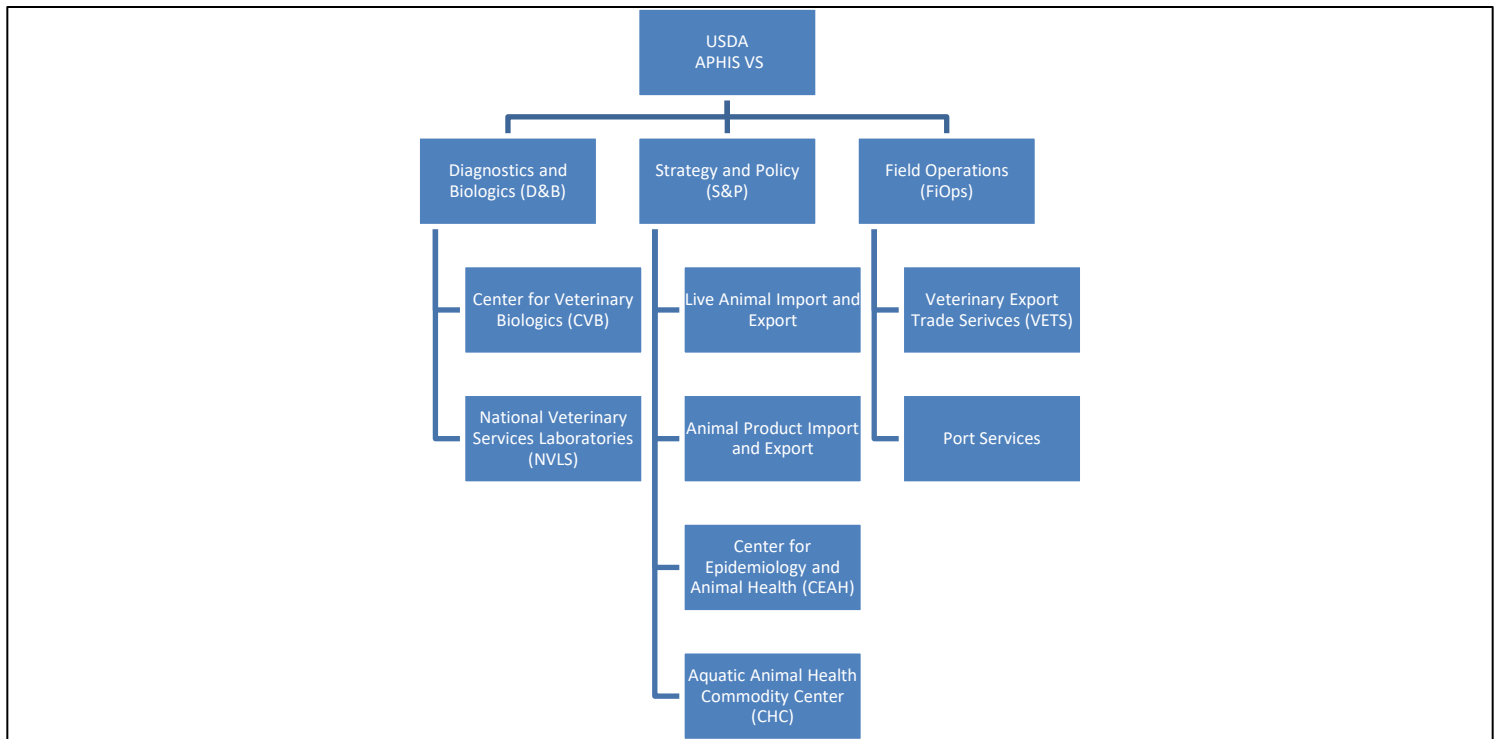
*CFR References:*

- Title 7 CFR 371.4: Describes the role of APHIS Veterinary Services
- Title 9 CFR Part 161: Describes the activities of an Accredited Veterinarian
- Title 9 CFR Part 130: User Fees
- Title 9 CFR Part 93.900 et. seq.: Importation of aquatic animal species
- Title 9 CFR Part 53: Foot and mouth disease, pleuropneumonia and certain other communicable diseases of livestock or poultry

**USDA APHIS VS Aquatic Animal Health Units**

VS supports a wide range of services available to the aquaculture farming community and allied businesses, including but not limited to laboratory approval for official health testing, vaccine development and approval, epidemiology and risk assessment expertise, outbreak investigation and response leadership and guidance, and import and export assistance and

certification. There are several units within VS that directly address the needs of the aquaculture farming community and allied businesses including units in Diagnostics and Biologics (D&B), Strategy and Policy (S&P) and Field Operations (FiOps) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Organizational structure of units within Veterinary Services (VS) that have programs and activities that directly impact the U.S. aquaculture farming community and allied supporting businesses. This figure does not reflect all units or programs in VS.

## 1. Strategy and Policy (S&P)

- **Commodity Health Center (CHC) - Aquatic Animal Health**
  - Provides policy and program management by establishing goals and policy for VS activities related to aquatic livestock health.
  - [USDA APHIS | Aquaculture Information](#)
- **Trade**

Provides policy and program management for the import and export of live aquatic animals and their products.

  - **Export:**
    - [USDA APHIS | Live Animal Export Resources – Aquatic Animals](#)
    - [USDA APHIS | International Regulations \(IRegs\) for Animal Product Exports](#)



- **Import:**
    - [USDA APHIS | Fish, Fertilized Eggs, and Gametes](#)
    - [USDA APHIS | Import Animal Products](#)
    - [USDA APHIS | Organisms and Vectors Guidance & Permitting](#)
  - **Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH)**

Supports monitoring and surveillance programs, risk assessment and analyses to generate science-based information for decision-making around complex issues.

    - [USDA APHIS | General CEAH Information](#)
    - [USDA APHIS | Animal Health Surveillance in the United States](#)
  - **National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP)**

Provides training in aquatic animal health for accredited veterinarians conducting health inspections, issuing health certificates for movement or trade, and responding to aquatic livestock health issues.

    - [National Veterinary Accreditation Program](#)
- 2. Diagnostics and Biologics (D&B)**
- **National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL)**

NVSL is the APHIS Reference Laboratory for aquatic animal diseases by providing laboratory confirmation and characterization services and support for the development and improvement of pathogen detection tools and diagnostics. NVSL is also responsible for laboratory approval of entities conducting tests to support trade and official aquatic livestock health programs.

    - [USDA APHIS | Laboratory Information and Services](#)
    - [USDA APHIS | APHIS-Approved Laboratories](#) (NAHLN labs)
    - [ApprovedLabs\\_Aquaculture.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)
  - **Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB)**

Provides establishment (e.g., manufacturing facilities) licenses and product licenses for biologics (vaccines) used in the United States.

    - [USDA APHIS | Veterinary Biologics](#)
- 3. Field Operations (FiOps)**
- **Area Offices**

Carry out VS activities at the state level. Activities include provision of information about livestock health and investigating reports of sick or dead animals.

    - [USDA APHIS | VS Contacts: Area Offices](#)
  - **Veterinary Export Trade Services (VETS)**

Provides services to verify export health certificate requirements and endorsement.

    - [USDA APHIS | VS Contacts: Live Animal and Animal Product Exports](#)
  - **Port Services**

Provides services for the import and export of live aquatic animals.

    - [USDA APHIS | VS Contacts: Field Operations Port Services](#)

**Resources:**

To contact the VS Aquatic Animal Health Programs, please send email to [VSAquacultureHealth@usda.gov](mailto:VSAquacultureHealth@usda.gov).

**Additional resources available to support U.S. aquaculture farming community:**

[USDA APHIS | State Regulations for Domestic Movement of Live Aquatic Animals](#)

[USDA APHIS | National Aquaculture Health Plan & Standards \(NAHP&S\): 2021-2023](#)