



What Is the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)?

 ACE allows businesses to **electronically submit the import data** required by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and its partner Government agencies, including USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

 ACE **automates and streamlines** manual processes, eliminating paper.

 The new system will allow importers to **comply** with U.S. laws and regulations more **easily and efficiently**.



 **Filers are responsible for developing or acquiring the software** needed to support the functional aspects of ACE, including the preparation, electronic filing, and, as necessary, printing of required forms.

 **Government-to-Government certificates**—phytosanitary and veterinary certificates—**must still be presented in their original paper format**.

ACE IS AVAILABLE FOR USE NOW.

ACE is currently optional for those importing APHIS-regulated products. Because ACE will eventually become mandatory, we encourage importers to contact their broker to learn more and start using it as soon as possible.

Why Should I Use ACE?



Accuracy
ACE allows CBP and APHIS to collect **more complete and accurate data**, helping them make timely science-based decisions about the admissibility of imported commodities.



Speed
ACE **speeds up entry processing**, streamlining the process and allowing products to be released quickly.



Validation
Filers receive an error message when the data does not pass validations or if certain data is missing, allowing them to **correct errors before they delay the release of a shipment**.

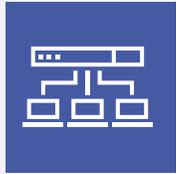


Improvement
ACE gives importers the chance to **troubleshoot and improve their own processes**.

For more information, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/ace or email us at ace.itds@usda.gov.



How To Get Started With ACE



The **Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)** is a **single portal system** designed to electronically collect and distribute import data that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and its partner Government agencies (PGAs) require.



CBP uses ACE to collect import data traditionally collected on paper, consolidating it and adding data elements into what are known as **message sets**.

ACE OR PAPER?

USE ACE



for import information on **commodities regulated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that require entry documentation**—certain animal and plant products, germplasm, soil, among others.

USE PAPER



for **Government-to-Government certificates**, such as phytosanitary and veterinary health certificates.

GETTING STARTED WITH ACE DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU USE A BROKER.



If you have a **BROKER**

1

Contact your broker to determine if they are able to electronically file APHIS import data through ACE. CBP works with 47 PGAs, all with unique needs, so it is important to verify that your broker has the ability to file APHIS-specific import data in message set formats.

2

If the broker is not prepared to submit APHIS-required data through the message set, they will need to work with an **ACE-approved software vendor** to obtain the appropriate software.

3

For each shipment you will need to **provide your broker with all the required documentation** so they can file the relevant information through ACE.

4

If you have questions about APHIS import requirements, go to APHIS' import/export web page at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/importexport or call the Customer Service Center at 1-844-820-2234.

5

If your broker has technical questions about filing APHIS data in ACE, email the APHIS ACE team at ace.itds@usda.gov.



If you are a **SELF-FILER**

1

If you do not wish to use a third-party broker, **you must obtain the appropriate software to file APHIS-required import data in ACE.**

2

If you choose to purchase software, **make sure the software is approved for submitting data to ACE.** You can find a list of ACE-approved software vendors at www.cbp.gov/document/guidance/abi-software-vendors-list.

3

When contacting a vendor, **you must ensure their software supports APHIS import data requirements.** ACE services 47 PGAs, so it is important that any software you purchase supports APHIS' unique needs.

4

When choosing a software vendor, **make sure your purchase includes technical support.** ACE data requirements will change over time, and software vendors will need to provide updates and technical support.

5

If you have questions about APHIS import requirements, go to APHIS' import/export web page at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/importexport or call the Customer Service Center at 1-844-820-2234.

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If you have technical questions about filing APHIS data in ACE, email the APHIS ACE team at ace.itds@usda.gov.

7

If you choose not to file ACE data electronically, you will need to provide all your import information in paper form, which may result in slower customs review and increased costs due to: longer review time for paper submissions, potential for lost and/or delayed paperwork, and inability to anticipate issues.

For more information, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/ace or email us at ace.itds@usda.gov.

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