

THE FIVE TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF CERTIFICATION

1. A veterinarian should be asked to certify only those matters, which are within his own knowledge, can be ascertained by him personally or are the subject of a supporting certificate from another veterinarian, who does have personal knowledge of the matters in question and is authorised to provide such a supporting document.
Matters not within the knowledge of a veterinarian, and not the subject of such a supporting certificate, but known to other persons, e.g. the farmer, the breeder or the truck driver, should be the subject of a declaration by those persons only.
2. Neither a veterinarian nor any person described in 1 above should be requested or required to sign anything relating to matters which cannot be verified by the signatory.
3. Veterinarians should not issue a certificate which might raise questions of a possible conflict of interest, e.g. in relation to their own animals.
4. All certificates should be written in terms which are as simple and easy to understand as possible.
5. Certificates should not use words or phrases, which are capable of more than one interpretation.
6. Certificates should be:-
 - a. produced on one sheet of paper or, where more than one page is required, in such a form that any two or more pages are part of an integrated whole and indivisible;
 - b. given a unique number, with records being retained by the issuing authority of persons to whom certificates bearing particular numbers were supplied.
7. Certificates should be written in the language of the veterinarian signing them, and accompanied by an official translation of the certificate into a language of the country of ultimate destination.
8. Certificates should identify animals individually except in cases where this is impractical e.g. day old chicks.
9. Certificates should not require a veterinarian to certify that there has been compliance with the law of the Community or a third country unless the provisions of the law are set out clearly on the certificate or have been provided to him by the issuing authority.
10. Where appropriate, notes for guidance should be provided to the certifying veterinarian by the issuing authority indicating the extent of the enquiries he is expected to make, the examinations he is required to carry out, or to clarify any details of the certificate which may require further interpretation.
11. Certificates should always be issued and presented in the original. Photocopies are not acceptable.
Provided that:-
 - a. a copy of the certificate (clearly marked "COPY") should always be provided to the authority by whom the certificates were issued - see 6 above; and

b. where, for any good and sufficient reason (such as damage in transit) a duplicate certificate is authorised and supplied by the issuing authority; this must be clearly marked "duplicate" before issue.

12. When signing a certificate, a veterinarian should ensure that:-

a. he signs and completes any manuscript portions in a colour of ink which does not readily photocopy i.e. a colour other than black;

b. the certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those which are indicated on the face of the certificate to be permissible, and subject to such changes being initialled and stamped by a veterinarian;

c. the certificate bears not only his signature but also, in clear lettering, his name, qualifications and address and (where appropriate) his official or practice stamps;

d. the certificate bears the date on which the certificate was signed and issued and (where appropriate) the time for which the certificate will remain valid;

e. no part of the certificate is left blank so that it could subsequently be completed by some person other than the veterinarian.