(7) Bonding and grounding central office cable entrances. The RUS Telecommunications Engineering and Construction Manual (TE&CM) Section 810 provides bonding and grounding guidance for central office cable entrances. Splicing operations shall not be attempted before all metallic cable shield and strength members are bonded and grounded.

Dated: January 18, 1995.

Bob J. Nash,

Under Secretary, Rural Economic and Community Development. [FR Doc. 95–1937 Filed 1–25–95; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 3410–15–P

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 92

[Docket No. 93-096-3]

Horses From Mexico; Quarantine Requirements

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA. ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are amending the regulations regarding the importation of horses from Mexico to remove the requirement that such horses be quarantined for not less than 7 days in vector-proof quarantine facilities before being imported into the United States. This action is warranted because Mexico has reported no cases of Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE) in over a year, and we have determined that horses imported from Mexico without a 7-day quarantine will not pose a risk of transmitting VEE to horses in the United States.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 16, 1995. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Joyce Bowling, Staff Veterinarian, Import-Export Animals Staff, National Center for Import-Export, Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA, P.O. Drawer 810, Riverdale, MD 20783. The telephone number for the agency contact will change when agency offices in Hyattsville, MD, move to Riverdale, MD, during February. Telephone: (301) 436–8170 (Hyattsville); (301) 734–8170 (Riverdale).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The regulations in 9 CFR part 92, referred to below as the regulations, govern the importation into the United States of specified animals and animal products, including horses from Mexico, to prevent the introduction into the United States of various animal diseases.

On September 22, 1994, we published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 48576– 48577, Docket No. 93–096–2) a proposal to amend the regulations to remove the requirement that horses imported into the United States from Mexico be quarantined for not less than 7 days in a vector-free facility.

We also proposed to remove the requirement in § 92.324 that horses from Mexico intended for importation into the United States through land border ports be quarantined in Mexico at a facility approved by the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and constructed so as to prevent the entry of mosquitoes and other hematophagous insects.

We solicited comments concerning the proposed rule for 60 days ending November 21, 1994. The one comment we received by that date supported the rule as written.

Therefore, based on the rationale set forth in the proposed rule, we are adopting the provisions of the proposal as a final rule without change. Although a 7-day quarantine will no longer be required, horses from Mexico intended for importation into the United States, except those to be imported for immediate slaughter, must still be quarantined at a designated port until they (1) test negative to an official test for dourine, glanders, equine piroplasmosis, and equine infectious anemia; and (2) test negative to any other tests that may be required by APHIS. Additionally, all horses intended for importation from Mexico must be guarantined until they are inspected and found free from communicable disease and fever-tick infestation.

Effective Date

This is a substantive rule that removes restrictions and, pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 553, may be made effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

This rule removes the requirement that horses imported from Mexico be quarantined for 7 days at vector-proof quarantine facilities. This requirement is no longer necessary, due to the elimination of VEE in Mexico. Therefore, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that this rule should be effective 15 days after the date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

Executive Order 12866 and Regulatory Flexibility Act

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12866. The rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and, therefore, has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 604, we have performed a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis regarding the impact of this rule on small entities.

This rule removes the requirement that horses imported from Mexico be quarantined for 7 days at vector-proof quarantine facilities. No issues were raised by public comments in response to the Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis we published in our proposal, and we identified no significant alternatives to this rule.

Compared with the 5-month period from October 1992 through February 1993 (before the 7-day quarantine requirement was established), there was a significant decline in the number of horses imported from Mexico during the period from October 1993 through February 1994 (following establishment of the 7-day quarantine requirement). During the 1992/1993 5-month period, there were 3,772 horses imported from Mexico, compared with only 125 during the 1993/1994 5-month period. It is reasonable to assume that the additional costs associated with the quarantine were at least partially responsible for the reduction in the number of horses imported during the 1993/1994 period.

There is a \$50 hourly fee for inspection services conducted in Mexico by APHIS veterinary medical officers (in addition to an APHIS per horse charge of \$28.50). Assuming that APHIS services are rendered for 2 hours during each day of quarantine, and assuming an average quarantine period of 3 days prior to establishment of the 7-day guarantine, the reduction in user fee costs from the lifting of the restrictions due to VEE will be about \$400 per shipment (\$700 minus \$300). For an average shipment of 40 horses, the savings in fees will be about \$10 per head.

Other quarantine costs, such as for feed and handling, can also be expected to decrease by more than one-half once the 7-day quarantine is no longer required. Whereas quarantine costs prior to establishment of the 7-day quarantine averaged about \$3 per head per day, we estimate that during the period following establishment of the 7day quarantine period, these charges increased to between \$5 and \$10 per day, due to additional precautionary measures. Again assuming a 3-day