USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

APHIS eFile

Guidance for Using the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA)

December 2024

WELCOME!

The VS Permitting Assistant (VSPA) provides guidance on APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) requirements for international import, international transit, and domestic interstate movement of VS-regulated commodities. You must complete the Permitting Assistant to learn the admissibility requirements for your commodity(ies). You will only need to complete an application if a permit is required.

If applying for a multi-ingredient animal product, make sure to add all of your materials to your product ingredient list. Examples of multi-ingredient animal products include nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, diagnostic test kits, fertilizers.

For more APHIS eFile VSPA support materials:

Check out our "How to" playlist on the APHIS YouTube Channel

Review this and other User Guides online on the APHIS eFile Training Page

I AM AN APPLICANT

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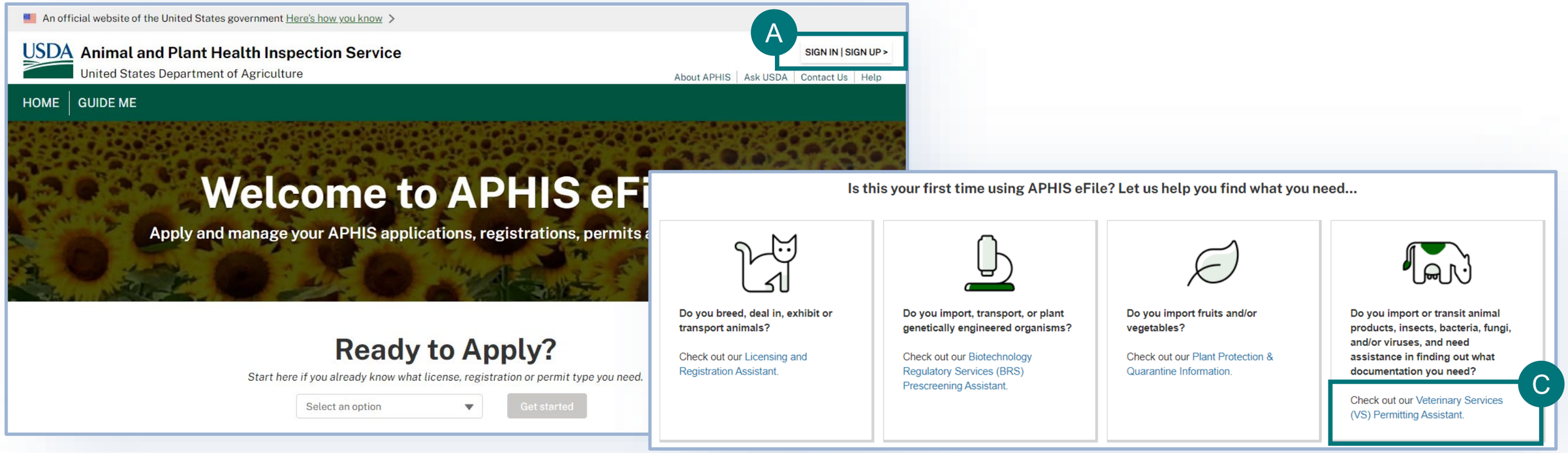
Sign in to eFile

A Navigate to https://efile.aphis.usda.gov/s/ . *Login is OPTIONAL. If your VSPA search results that you need to submit a permit application, you will need to login in order to complete the application.*

To log in: click Sign In/Sign Up

- If you do not have login credentials, select **Create an Account** and follow the steps; for help, visit this site: https://login.gov/help. **You must have valid login credentials to apply in APHIS eFile.**
  - Login Credentials are issued to an **individual** and are **not** to be shared with others.

B Scroll to the Find What You Need section and select the **Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant link.**



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 1

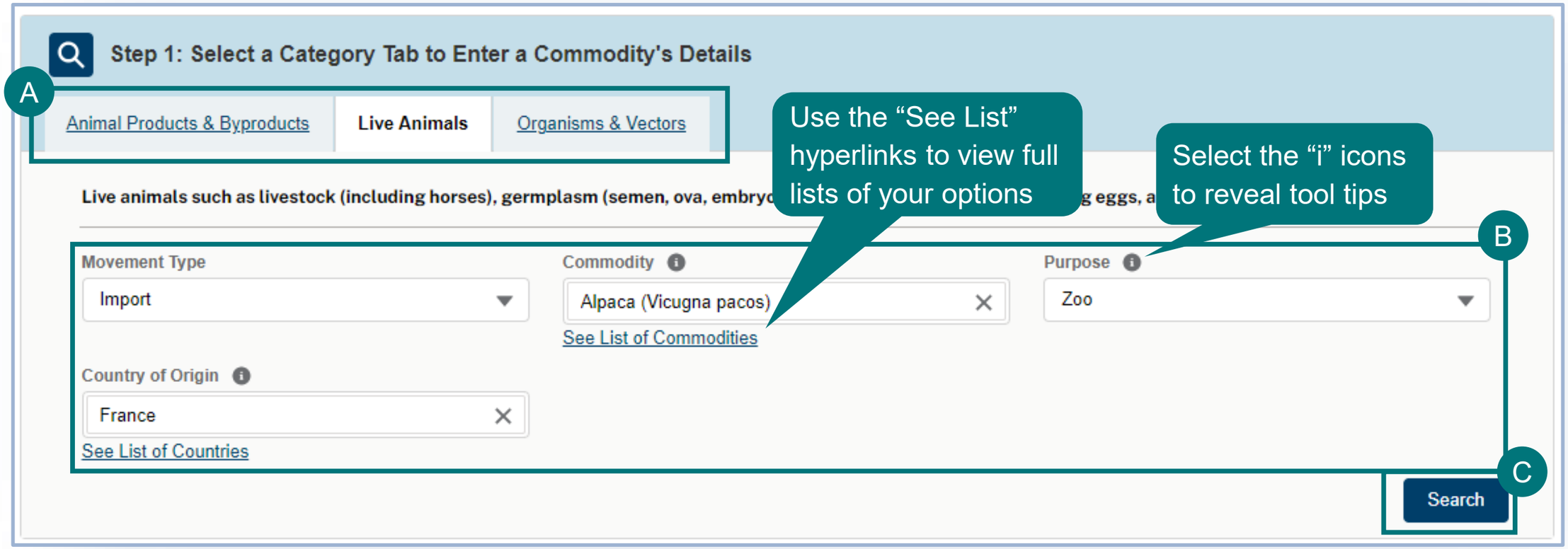
Complete the Permitting Assistant to begin the application process.

A Select the **tab** associated with the type of material you are searching for.

B Enter the **material details** into the appropriate search fields.

C Select the **Search button.**

Note: Repeat steps 1-2-3 on the VSPA for all regulated commodities you wish to move. The VSPA will organize them into the appropriate applications.



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SEARCH PAGE

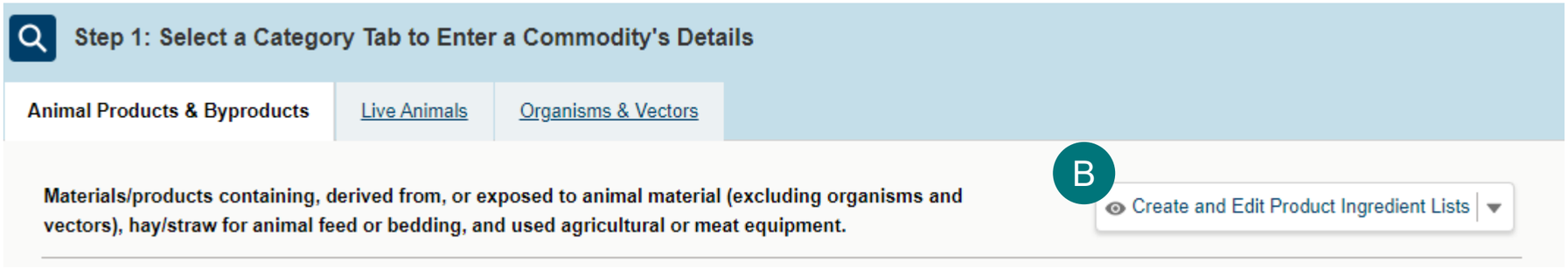
Using the VSPA for Animal Products:

- Animal products are materials/products containing, derived from, or exposed to animal material (excluding organisms and vectors), hay/straw for animal feed or bedding, and used agricultural or meat equipment.
- Use the VSPA to Itemize your permit request by choosing the appropriate *animal-origin* materials/ingredients in your commodity(ies).
- There are two ways to itemize your request:

A as "single materials" - This is the case when the animal materials are being imported individually. The imported commodity has animal materials which are not mixed species/origins. For example, if you are importing bulk dried egg, bulk single-species fat, canned/bottled milk, tissue/blood samples from individual animals. Repeat the steps 1-2-3 to add each animal material from each animal and country to your request.

OR

B as a product/products containing 1 or more animal origin ingredients – The imported commodity consists animal materials are mixed together in a product). Some examples of such commodities include nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, culture media, diagnostic test kits, and fertilizers. Use the "Create or Edit Product Ingredient List" button to create a named product (you can use a generic name, such as "nutraceutical", "pet food", etc.), and then repeat steps 1-2-3 of the VSPA to add each animal origin ingredient from each animal to your named product. Do not choose ingredient/material names in the VSPA that contain the word "bulk".

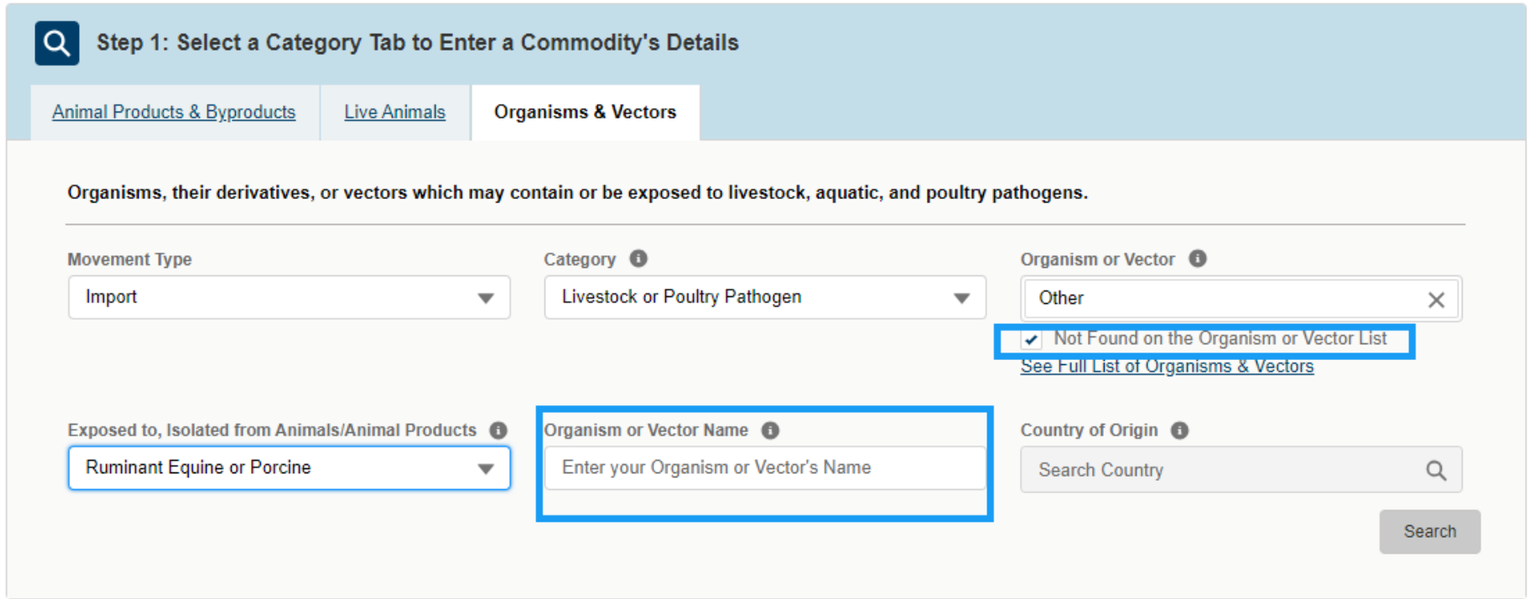


Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SEARCH PAGE

Using the VSPA for Organisms and Vectors:

- Organisms and vectors include all cultures or collections of organisms, or their derivatives, or vectors (such as mosquitoes, ticks, etc.) which are known to cause or disseminate infectious disease among livestock or poultry animals.
  - This includes organisms that may not have been originally isolated from animals, but are known to cause disease among livestock or poultry (such as all influenza A viruses)
- Repeat the steps 1-2-3 on the VSPA to choose all the organisms and vectors you wish to receive.
- When using the VSPA to understand the import requirements for If you are searching for an Organism and Vector and are unable to find it on the list, select the **Not Found on the Organism or Vector List** checkbox. This will reveal an “Organism or Vector Name” field where you can free-text enter the name of your Organism or Vector.
  - Please note, if your movement type is interstate, this will not be an option.

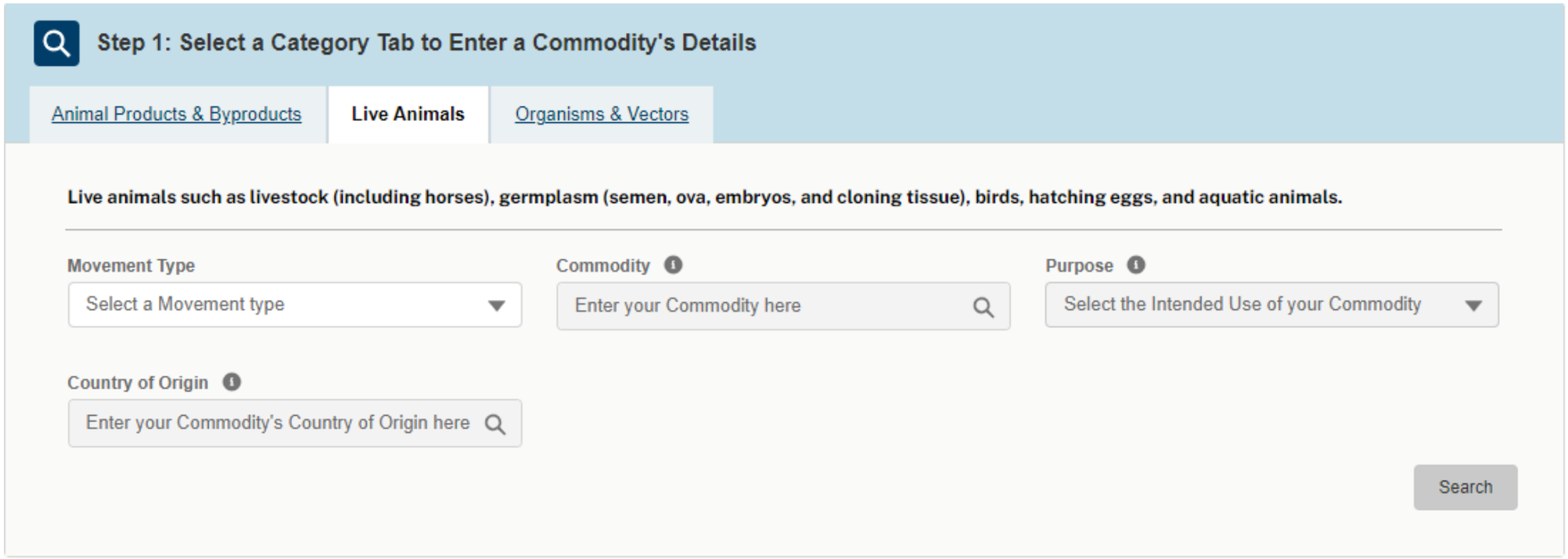


Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SEARCH PAGE

Using the VSPA for Live Animals:

- Live animals such as livestock (including horses), germplasm (semen, ova, embryos, and cloning tissue), birds, hatching eggs, and aquatic animals.
  - This includes horses, birds, pigs, cow, etc which may be "pets".
- Complete steps 1-2-3 on the VSPA to choose the live animals you wish to receive.



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SEARCH PAGE

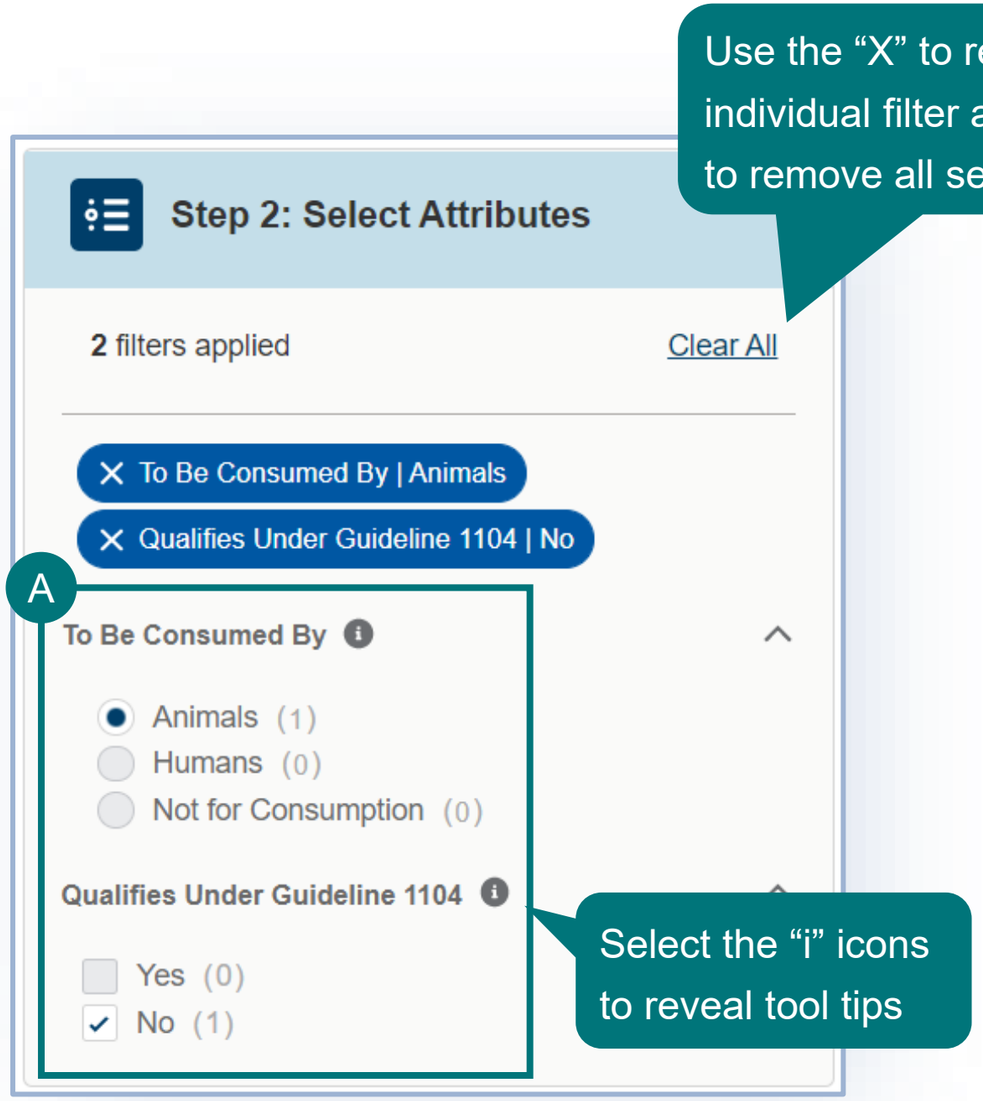
- Once you have completd step 1 of the VSPA and clicked "search", proceed to step 2 of the VSPA.

A Select the **Attribute Filters** to refine your material search results.

Note: For best results **complete ALL attribute filters** from top to bottom order until there is **only ONE result**. Then proceed to step 3 of the VSPA.

Be sure to **click on the "i" icons** to read the full explanation of the filter/question.

Some of the filters are selection-order dependent, meaning that your first selection may limit which filters you may select next.



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 3

Note: You will likely not need to adjust your view of the Result Cards, as you should use all attribute filters until **one result** remains.

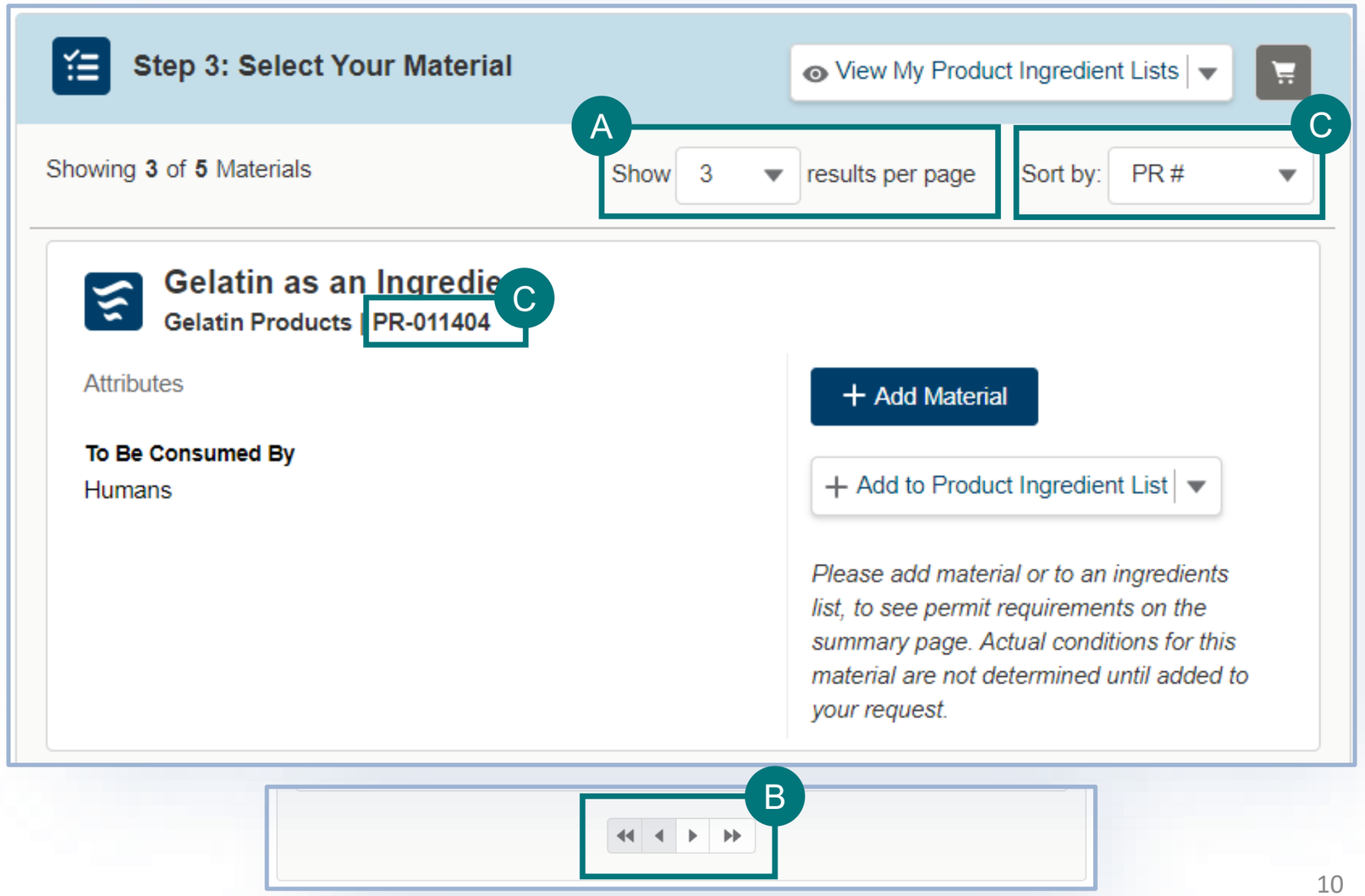
Use the following tools to adjust your view of the Result Cards.

A Use the drop-down to **change the number of Result Cards per page.**

B Use the arrows to **view more pages** of Result Cards.

C Use the drop-down to sort by **Prescreening Result number (PR #) or Outcome.**

- Each Result Card has a unique PR #. If you need to communicate with VS about a specific result card, you can use the PR #.



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 3

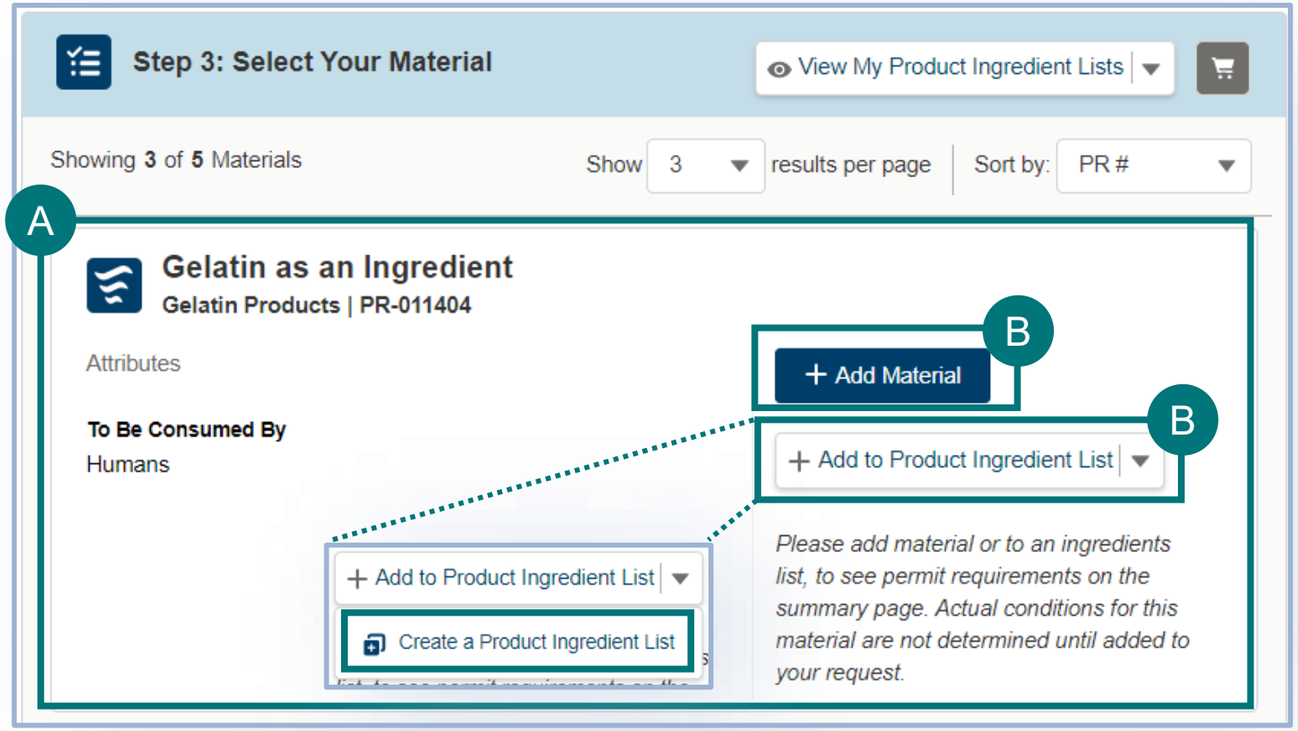
A **Review the information** on the Result Card.

B **Select Add Material/Commodity** to add the material/commodity to your application

- **For <u>animal products</u>**
  - **Click add material if you are importing single materials (ex: single-species bulk material, tissue samples).**

OR

  - Select **Add to Product Ingredient List** to add the material to your application as an ingredient within a larger product (ex: nutraceuticals, food products, pet food, diagnostic test kits, fertilizers).
  - To add a material as an ingredient you will need to **Create a Product Ingredient List**. By creating the list from this button, you'll automatically add the material to the new list.



Note: If you are importing Animal Products, **do NOT select both Add Material and Add to Product Ingredient List. Select only one option.**

Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

STEP 3

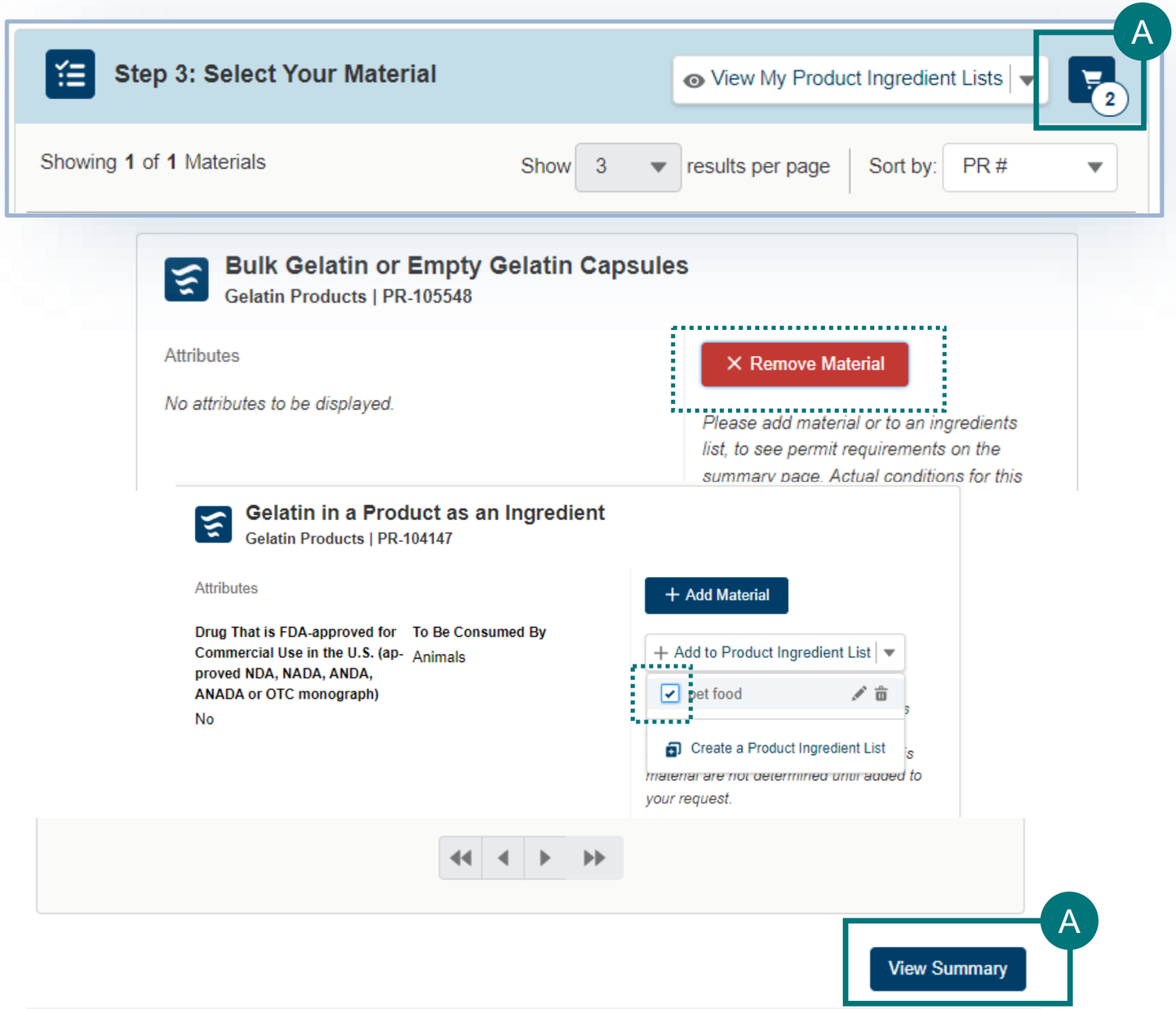
To remove a single material, select the Remove Material button.

To remove an ingredient, uncheck the checkbox associated with the Product Ingredient List.

> **Note:** You must use one of these two options to remove a material. Once you have added a material, refreshing the VSPA will not remove them.

To add additional materials from other animals/countries, edit any of the search fields in step 1 and repeat the steps 1-2-3 in order.

A Once you've added all your materials proceed to your Application Summary by selecting the **Shopping Cart icon** or the **View Summary button.**



Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

SUMMARY PAGE

The VSPA Summary

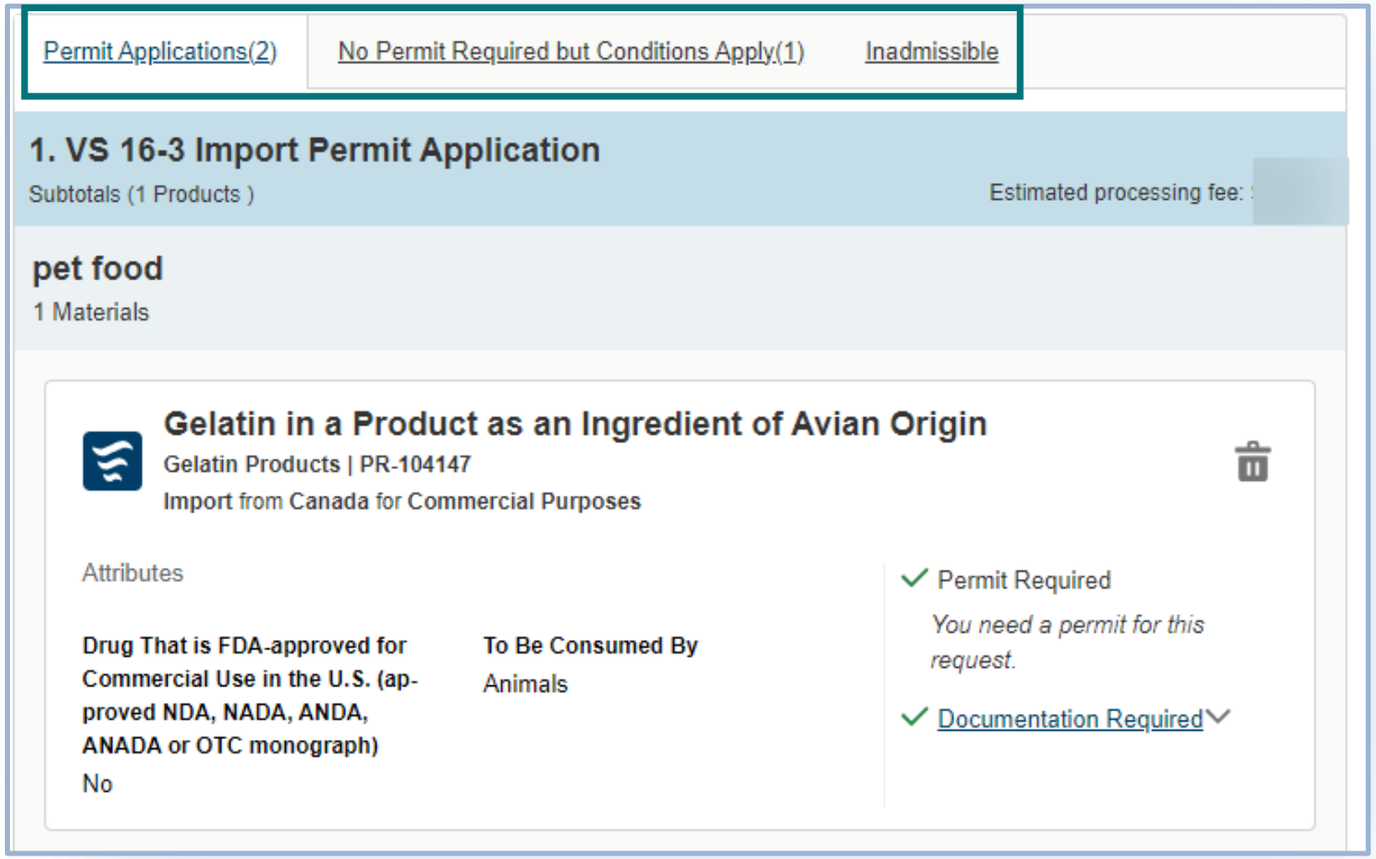
The materials you have added have been sorted into categories. **Select each category tab** to view the results in that category.

Permit Application – Materials listed in this section require Permit applications. The materials have been sorted onto the appropriate number of applications.

The materials you have added have been sorted into categories:

No Permit Required but Conditions Apply – Materials listed in this section do not require a permit application but may have additional conditions (i.e. a required certificate).

Inadmissible – Materials listed in this section are not allowed for import, transport, or transit.



Note: Make sure you have added all the commodities from all the animals and source countries to your request by repeating steps 1-2-3 of the VSPA.

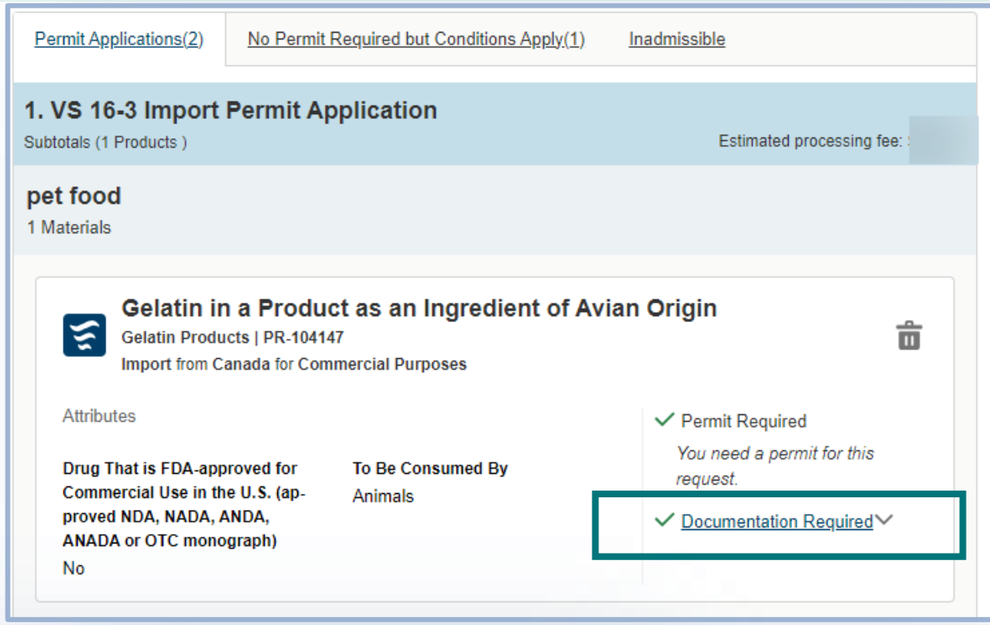
Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

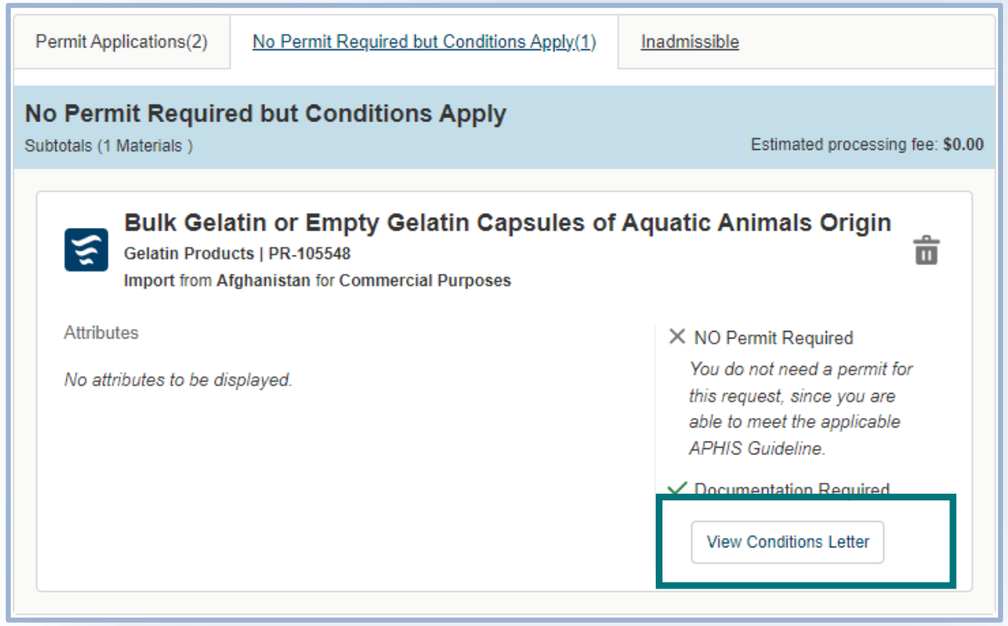
SUMMARY PAGE

Review the outcome carefully and read the guidance information.

Permit Application (s) – click on "documentation required" and read the guidance.

No Permit Required but Conditions Apply or **Inadmissible** – click on the "view conditions letter" or "view letter of denial" button to read the reason that a permit is not needed or the reason the material is inadmissible.



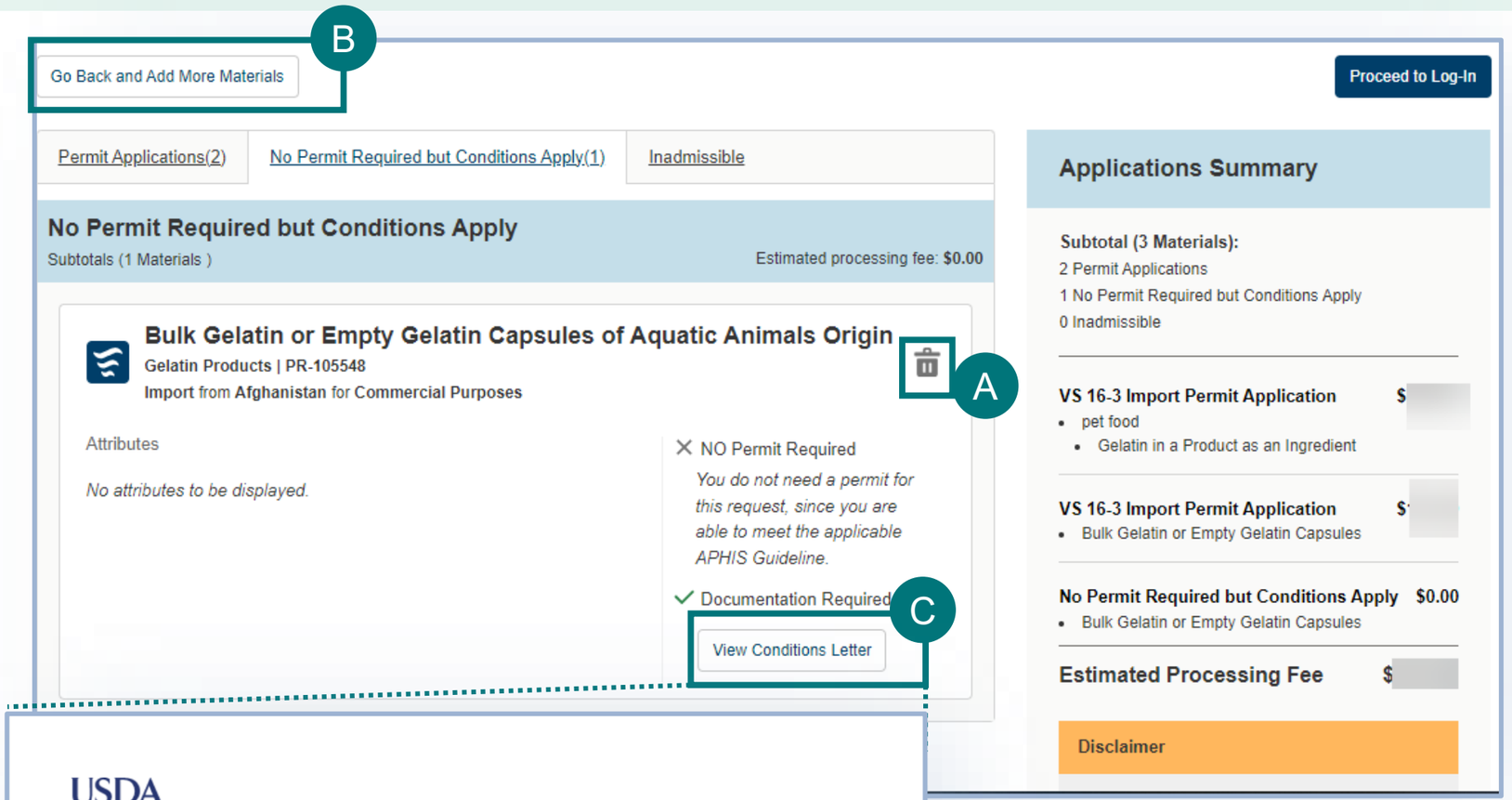


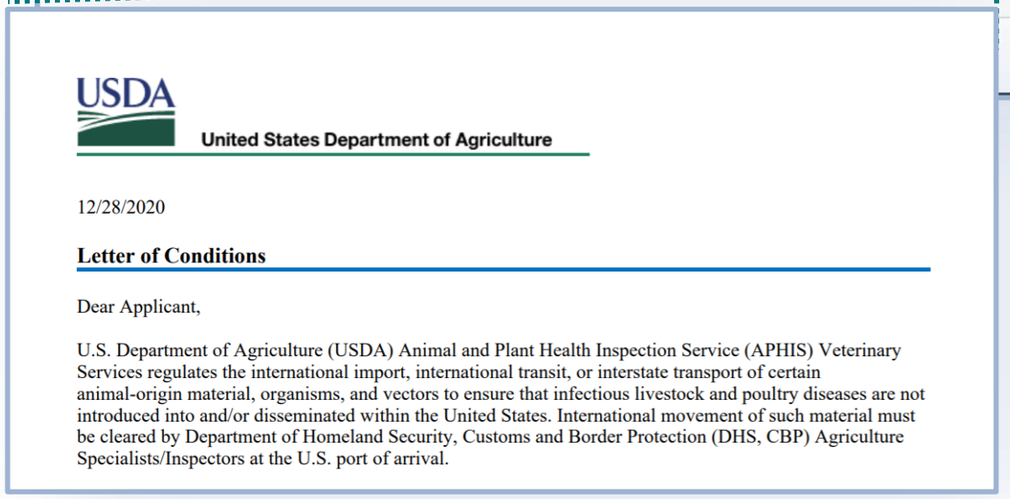
Create your request with the VS Permitting Assistant

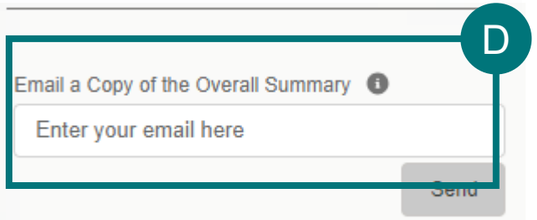
SUMMARY PAGE

- A **To delete a material** from your summary request, select the **trashcan icon.**
- B **To add more materials**, select **Go Back and Add More Materials.**
- C When applicable, download all letters by selecting the **View Conditions Letter** button associated with each material.
- D To **send yourself or someone else a copy of this request summary**, enter your **email** into the field and select **Send.**

***The summary is **NOT a permit application.**





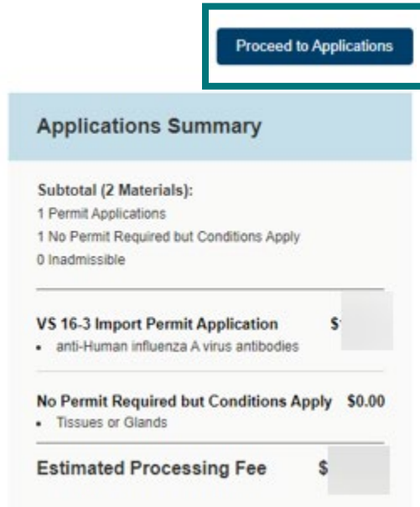


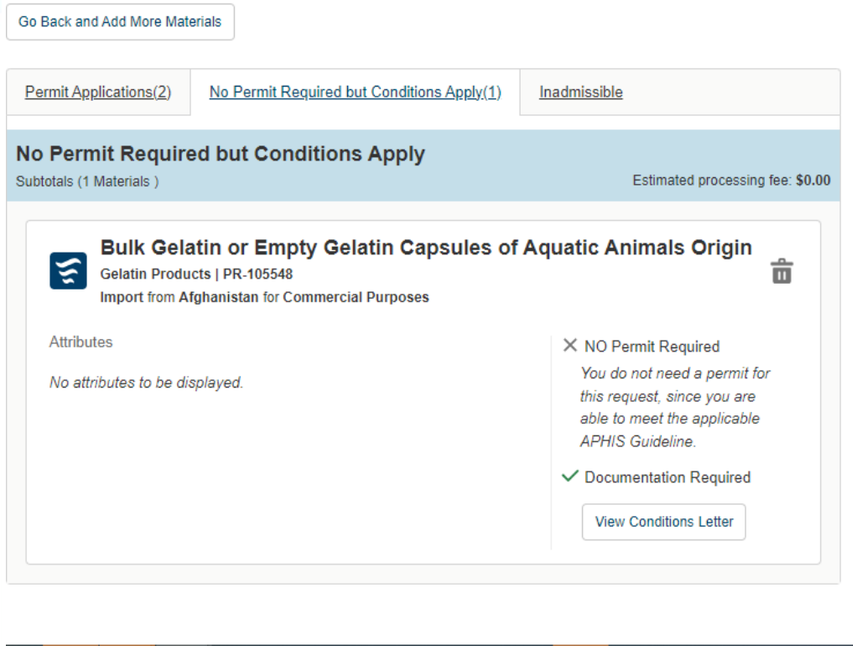
Proceed to Application(s) from VSPA

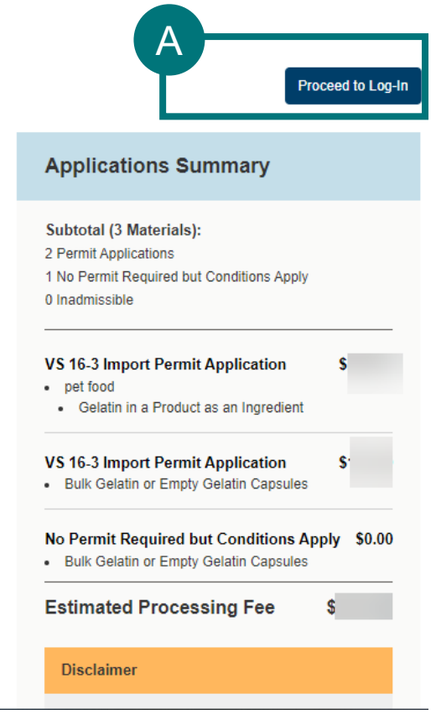
SUMMARY PAGE

A Once you have reviewed all your results, select the **Proceed to Applications button** (it may appear as **"proceed to log in"** if you did not sign in yet) to continue to complete and submit your applications in eFile.

- Only the items from your summary which require the permit application will be transferred to the permit application.
  - If no items require a permit, then you will not be able to log in and apply for a permit.







Note: In the two images shown, you can proceed to the permit application *only* for the permitted materials. The commodities not needing a permit will not be transferred to a permit application.

APPENDIX

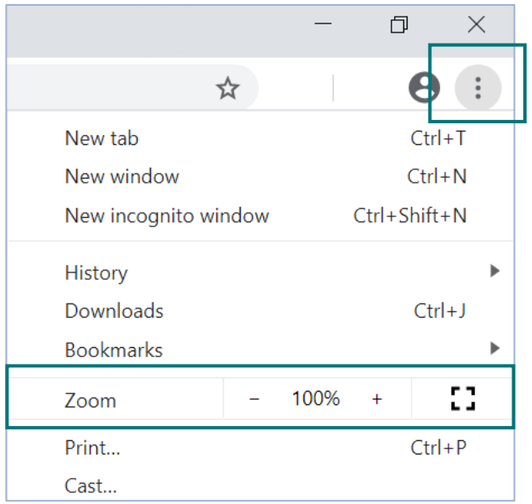
System Setup

- **Browser** – For the best user experience, please use Google Chrome.

  Other available browsers include Firefox, Safari, and Edge.

- **Emails** – Add aphis.efile@usda.gov to your address book so that any Request Summaries sent from the VSPA do not go to your junk box

- **Zoom** –100%



Contact

If you require assistance with your **applications** (such as status requests, help with understanding the VSPA, etc), please contact:

Veterinary Services

(301) 851 3300

Animal Product, Organism & Vector Help:
APIE@usda.gov

Live Animals Help:

LAIPermits@usda.gov

If you require **technical assistance**, please contact:

help@usda.gov

Technical support includes account management, errors within the APHIS eFIle system, or problems accessing information such as an issued permit. ***DO NOT** contact the helpdesk requesting a status on an application.