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Secretary of Agriculture Announces Santa's Reindeer Receive Clean Bill of Health, Approved for Gift Deliveries in Pennsylvania on Christmas Eve

Hershey, PA – Today, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Pennsylvania State Veterinarian Dr. Kevin Brightbill joined Santa Claus and his nine reindeer at Hersheypark Christmas Candylane to announce that they have received a clean bill of health and are cleared for take-off on December 24.

"Not everyone knows what takes place behind the scenes to allow Santa and his nine reindeer to take flight on Christmas Eve," said Agriculture Secretary Redding. "Thanks to Dr. Brightbill, his counterpart in the North Pole, the care of ZooAmerica veterinarians, and Santa's due diligence, families can expect gifts under the tree Christmas morning."

The reindeer, answering to the names of Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph received clearance to fly to Pennsylvania from Dr. Robert F. Gerlach, Alaska's state veterinarian. This Certificate of Veterinary Inspection and Permit to Ship allows them to fly from rooftop to rooftop in PA for the purpose of toy delivery.

"I'm grateful to Dr. Gerlach for his thorough inspection of these reindeer," said Dr. Brightbill, Pennsylvania's state veterinarian. "According to their certificates, despite one's glaringly red nose and their magical ability to fly, word is that they're in extraordinary health!"

Such certificates are required as an assurance that contagious diseases are not carried across state lines. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture veterinarians supply these certifications for animals residing in PA before they're transported across state lines.

"Hersheypark is honored that Santa trusts his nine reindeer to the care of our ZooAmerica team throughout the holiday season," said Amanda Polyak, Public Relations Manager at the Hershey Entertainment and Resorts Company. "We're the only place to see them all together in the Northeast through Jan. 1 so we wish them a magical flight before they come back to Hershey!"

To learn more about the department's efforts to protect animal health, visit agriculture.pa.gov.

Note: Photos and video from the event will be available at pacast.com.

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