

Stronger import rules for Irish cattle possible

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Cattle imported from the Republic of Ireland will have to meet strengthened brucellosis testing requirements if proposed new U.S. Department of Agriculture import regulations are adopted.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said recent occurrences of bru-

cellosis in cattle imported from Ireland have made it necessary to require additional evidence that future imports are free of this contagious disease of livestock and humans.

Atwell said the proposed new rules would require imported cattle from Ireland to originate from herds that meet rigid standards of testing to demonstrate

they are free of brucellosis. This would include negative annual herd tests for the preceding two years, and records showing that additions to the herd have the same brucellosis-free status.

In addition to the herd health status requirement, the individual animals would have to pass two negative brucellosis tests with an interval of not less than 60 days nor

more than 120 days between tests. These tests would use all three of the accepted brucellosis testing procedures—the plate or agglutination test, the brucellosis card test and the complement fixation test.

The cattle to be imported would have to be maintained for at least 60 days before shipment at a separate isolation facility ap-

proved by Irish government veterinarians. From that facility they would be shipped directly to the U.S. port of entry quarantine station without further contact with any other livestock.

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease which causes breeding problems and losses from reduced calf crops and lower milk yields.

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