

Ontario Ag Minister Visits Pa. For Trade Talk

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Paul Slayton, director of the Pennsylvania Beef Council, agreed that "there's a real need to open the border" but it is "really the USDA" who has the responsibility to decide.

According to Slayton, it could have also been a U.S. cow that turned up with BSE.

While U.S. beef producers are the group most concerned about reopening the border, it's important to remember that "this situation could be reversed," Slayton said.

"There should be very little concern, if any, about the one case of mad cow disease in Canada," he said. "Research has confirmed that it was just one case and the science was thorough enough."

Slayton said the U.S. has "used up and become pretty current" in its surplus beef supply in the past 90 days.

"It probably couldn't be a better time" to open the border, he noted.

The USDA has a responsibility to reestablish beef trade "without causing undue economic stress

on our producers," Slayton said.

John Enck, director of Pennsylvania's Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission, said Pennsylvania experienced a similar situation in 2000 when an outbreak of avian influenza resulted in Japan banning U.S. poultry for six months.

Now, Japan's refusal to accept any Canadian beef processed in the U.S. has become a major factor in U.S. trade negotiations with Canada.

"The Japanese trade issue is key to the whole thing," Enck said.

According to a recent USDA statement posted on its Website, "We do not feel that the Japanese government is justified in its decision to exclude Canadian beef from our beef and beef products exported to Japan. Although the United States does not believe such steps are necessary, we are working to provide the industry a system that can be used to verify U.S. beef exports ... we will continue to work to convince Japan to remove this unnecessary requirement."

The USDA announcement to

partially open the border came Aug. 8 after a close review of the international standards set by the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) — the standard-setting organization for animal health for 164 member nations; an exhaustive epidemiological investigation into the case by Canada, during which no other animals were found to be infected; and additional risk mitigation measures put in place by Canada in response to a review of their investigation by an independent expert panel.

Veneman said that USDA weighed these and many other factors as it evaluated the risk, including the preventive measures that Canada had in place prior to the detection of BSE, such as import controls, feed bans and surveillance measures conducted at levels that met or exceeded the OIE standards.

Based on these determinations, Veneman said that USDA will no longer prohibit the importation of hunter-harvested wild ruminant products intended for personal use and it will begin to accept applications for import permits for

certain products from Canada, including:

- Boneless sheep or goat meat from animals under 12 months of age;
- Boneless bovine meat from cattle under 30 months of age;
- Boneless Veal (meat) from calves that were 36 weeks of age or younger at slaughter;
- Fresh or frozen bovine liver;
- Vaccines for veterinary medicine for non-ruminant use; and
- Pet products and feed ingredients that contain processed animal protein and tallow of non-ruminant sources when produced in facilities with dedicated manufacturing lines.

Veneman noted that the single BSE case in Canada and its impact on global trade call for an international dialogue on BSE to develop more practical, consistent guidance to countries regarding the resumption of trade with countries that have reported cases of BSE.

Veneman said that the United States, along with Mexico and Canada, have requested that the OIE include such a dialogue in an upcoming meeting of international experts in September.

USDA Permitting Process

Hunters can immediately begin bringing wild ruminant meat products intended for their personal use into the United States, but will need a "Veterinary Services Special Permit for the Importation of Hunter-Harvested Wild Ruminant Meat," along with one of the following: a valid Canadian export certificate for game meat, or a copy of a valid hunting license or a valid hunting tag. The permit can be downloaded from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/>

bse/bse.html or obtained by calling the APHIS National Center for Import and Export at (301) 734-3277.

Certain other previously banned ruminant meat products may be imported with a "United States Veterinary Permit for Importation and Transportation of Controlled Material." The application can be completed on line at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/import-export.htm> or can be downloaded from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie>, or can be obtained by calling (301) 734-3277.

Veneman said that a rulemaking process would begin immediately for the importation of live ruminants and ruminant products.

In a statement released by National Farmers Union this week, President Dave Frederickson said, "Farmers Union continues to monitor the steps the administration is taking to keep the threat of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) out of the United States. We commend the U.S. Department of Agriculture for working to assure Japan, our number one beef customer, that beef shipments to Japan will come only from U.S. cattle."

Frederickson also said, "The secretary should immediately do the same for U.S. consumers by implementing the mandatory country-of-origin labeling law passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush last year.

"Before USDA moves to reopen the border for live cattle," said Frederickson, "we urge the secretary of agriculture to implement mandatory country-of-origin meat labeling.

Juniata County Farm Preserved By Conservancy

PORT ROYAL (Juniata Co.) — On Thursday, a ceremony celebrated the preservation of another Juniata County farm.

This 50-acre farm, owned by Drs. Meecee Baker and Robert Mikesell, has been protected by an agricultural conservation easement that keeps the farm available for agricultural uses in perpetuity.

An easement is a legal agreement or deed restriction between a landowner and a government entity or land trust such as the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy that permanently restricts a property's uses to protect its conservation values; in this case, agriculture. Monitored by the Conservancy once a year, the easement stays with the land, even when ownership changes.

Counties, with state funding may purchase easements on some of the larger, most productive farms, but the waiting list is long, especially for small or average productivity farms. While land trusts such as the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy do not generally pay for easements, there are still several benefits: The owner can be assured his land will be protected and he may enjoy substantial tax benefits as well. In addition, out-of-pocket costs such as surveys, appraisals, documentation, and legal expenses may be reimbursed up to \$5,000 by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

The Central Pennsylvania Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to the preserva-

tion of lands with natural, scenic, cultural, and agricultural value.

For additional information on easements contact your county conservation district or the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy at (717) 233-0221 or cpc@paonline.com.



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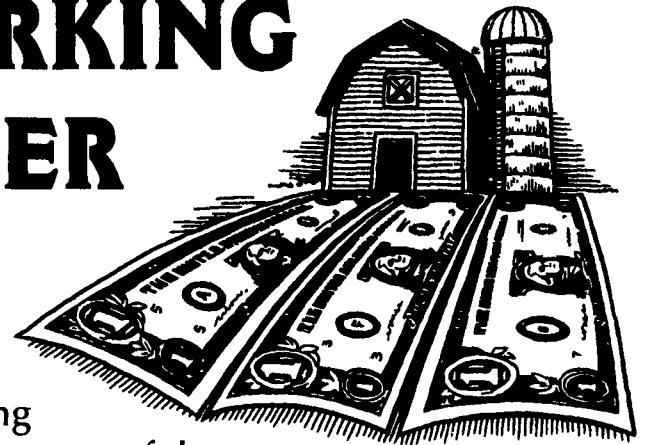
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