**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** Adopting A Risk Based Tolerance for Ractopamine in Beef Reduces Rejections by 90 Percent

**Country:** Egypt

**Post:** Cairo


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**Report Highlights:**
For a decade, trade of beef and beef products to Egypt have been very disrupted. This was mainly due to the application of zero tolerance of ractopamine. The zero-tolerance level was not based on risk assessment and was not in line with Codex MRL guidelines. The zero-tolerance increased both cost of release and the time required to clear customs. In early 2020, the National Food Safety Authority (NSFA) conducted a risk assessment and changed the tolerance level of 20 parts per billion (ppb) for the residual of ractopamine in liver and adopted Codex MRL guideline for muscle cuts at 10 ppb.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On November 15, 2020 Egypt’s National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) issued Decision No. 13/2020, which set new maximum residue limits (MRLs) for veterinary drugs including ractopamine. NFSA identified a tolerance level of 20 parts per billion (ppb) for the residual of ractopamine in liver and adopted Codex MRL guideline for muscle cuts.

The previous Egyptian standard regulating the imports of beef liver was based on European Union Regulation Number 2377/1990, which established a zero-tolerance level for many veterinary drug residues, including ractopamine. This became a major impediment to trade since 2012. The new decision of 20 ppb relaxes the zero-tolerance measure but is still lower than the Codex MRL at 40 ppb for beef liver. Decision No. 13/2020 does adopt Codex MRL for muscle cuts at 10 ppb. U.S. beef exports to Egypt, which mainly consist of offal, amounted to approximately $76 million in 2019.

**THE COST OF APPLYING ZERO TOLERANCE - BACKGROUND**

Upon an initial detection of ractopamine residue, importers generally request subsequent tests on beef shipments which carry an additional cost. Each test takes a minimum of five days but results often take up to four weeks. Egyptian regulations require that all shipments be tested at port. The testing of each sample costs EGP 1500 ($96) so in cases where three samples are tested, sampling alone may cost up to EGP 4500 (nearly $300). The direct costs of sampling coupled with the indirect costs associated with delayed port clearance resulted in undue time and financial burdens that were ultimately passed on to Egyptian consumers.
**RATES OF REJECTION BEFORE AND AFTER THE DECISION**

Due to the application of zero tolerance, almost 20 percent of the total beef offal imports from the U.S. were rejected. Currently the rejections don’t exceed two percent of the total imported quantities. In 2020, Egypt imported a sum of around 89 thousand tons, with almost 50 percent being from the U.S. Figure 1 illustrates the total world supply and the US share, from 2016 to 2020. Local importers report that trade is now easier due to the relaxed Ractopamine MRL. Shipment are now being released considerably faster than prior to the decision. Typically, shipments now are released in less than a week, and not more than 15 days at maximum. Before, shipments were being released in two or three months. The decision was a favorable turning point facilitating the trade of beef and beef products.

Figure 1

![Egypt Imports of Beef & Beef Products 2016 - 2020](image)

*Reference: Global Agriculture Trade System - GATS and Trade Data Monitor (TDM)*
Attachments:

No Attachments.