



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 5/7/1999

GAIN Report #CA9055

Canada

Livestock

Canadian Reaction to EU Beef Hormone Report 1999

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Report Highlights:

On May 6, 1999 Canada's Minister of Agriculture issued a strongly worded statement criticizing the European Union's (EU) continued unwillingness to meet its international obligations regarding its long-standing ban on Canadian beef produced with growth hormones.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Ottawa[CA1], CA

Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lyle Vanclief issued a strongly worded statement criticizing the European Union's (EU) continued unwillingness to meet its international obligations regarding its long-standing ban on Canadian beef produced with growth hormones.

In early May, a scientific committee of the EU issued a summary of a report that raised unfounded questions about the safety of growth hormones used in beef production. The WTO has twice rejected these same arguments, and concluded that the EU ban was not based on scientific evidence. The full EU report has not been made available for scrutiny.

On April 16, 1999 Canada published a list of EU agriculture and food products on which it may choose to impose retaliatory tariffs in the event that the EU fails to meet its WTO obligations. For information on the retaliation list see CA9041.

The Full text of Minister Vanclief's press release, based on a speech to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, follows:

Begin press release

OTTAWA, May 6, 1999 -- The Government of Canada believes that a recent document published by the European Union (EU) demonstrates its continued unwillingness to meet its international obligations regarding its long-standing ban on Canadian beef.

"The World Trade Organization (WTO) has made it clear, twice, that the EU ban on beef produced with growth hormones is not based on science," said Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief. "We can only conclude that these recent EU actions are an attempt to avoid fulfilling its international trade obligations."

"It is very unfortunate that the EU continues to use scare-mongering and misinformation to avoid living up to their responsibilities under the WTO," said Minister Vanclief. "We stand firmly behind our Canadian beef industry and will turn up the pressure on the EU to live up to their obligations and allow Canadian beef, which is of the highest quality in the world, into their markets."

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Canada conducted reviews of the growth-promoting hormones used in beef production and found them to be safe when used in accordance with good practices in the use of veterinary drugs. This is also the conclusion of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international body that establishes food standards to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

On April 16, the Government of Canada announced that it is seeking public comment on a proposal to increase tariffs on certain EU products in the event the EU continues to fall short of its WTO obligations. Tariffs of 100 per cent would be imposed on products taken from a list published in the Canada Gazette on April 17. The EU has until May 13, 1999 to comply with the WTO rulings.

The EU banned hormone-treated beef in 1989. Both Canada and the United States requested WTO dispute settlement panels in 1996.

A factsheet is available at www.agr.ca/cb/trade/canus/nacte.html

End press release

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