

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Poland

**Post:** Warsaw

### **Adulterated Beef Juat the Latest Challenge for Polish Livestock Producers**

**Report Categories:**

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

Poland's beef sector continues to sag under expanding public scrutiny in the fallout of the beef adulteration issue involving horse meat. On March 6, 2013 the Polish Veterinary Inspectorate reported initial investigation results of three positive samples in tests conducted for presence of horse protein. Two samples originated from products manufactured with raw material from Poland and the third from raw material sourced from another EU member state (undefined). The sector had yet to recover from the body blow leveled January 1 after the Courts forced the government to restrict ritual slaughter practices on animal rights grounds. Markets are expected to remain depressed for some time as a consequence of this double whammy.

**General Information:**

In Poland, official inspection of food products related to adulteration of beef with horse meat is being conducted by three governmental agencies: the Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection, the Agency for Inspection of Trade, and the Chief Veterinary Inspectorate. The Minister of Agriculture assigned the Chief Inspector of Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection to be the coordinator of food control.

On February 19 the European Commission (EC), via 2013/98/UE Commission Decision, mandated all member states tests beef products over the next month. The EC recommended that processed meat products be tested for DNA presence of horsemeat in products labeled as beef. Horse meat intended for human consumption will also be tested for presence of *phenylbutazone*. *Phenylbutazone*, an anti-inflammatory veterinary drug used with sport horses, is dangerous to human health and, therefore, prohibited in livestock whose meat is destined for human consumption. The testing program will be financed by the EC (75 percent) and Member State (25 percent) and will take approximately one month to complete, with the possibility to be continued for the next two months.

The first stage of the European-wide testing program will involve a total of 2250 samples of processed meat products labeled as containing beef currently on the retail market. The number of tests per individual countries will vary from 10 to 150 tests - depending on the size of the member state. Poland is obliged to take and test 150 samples to determine the presence of undeclared horse meat in products containing beef.

The Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection and the Agency for Inspection of Trade, two agencies, will be responsible for testing a total of 150 samples of beef products sourced from manufacturers and stores for possible presence of horse meat. Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection will collect 75 samples from the manufacturers of these products, and the Agency for Trade Inspection will take 75 samples at the retail level throughout the country. All samples will be tested to identify raw meat based on analysis of DNA.

The Chief Veterinary Inspectorate, with be responsible for tests of horse meat for residues of *phenylbutazone*.

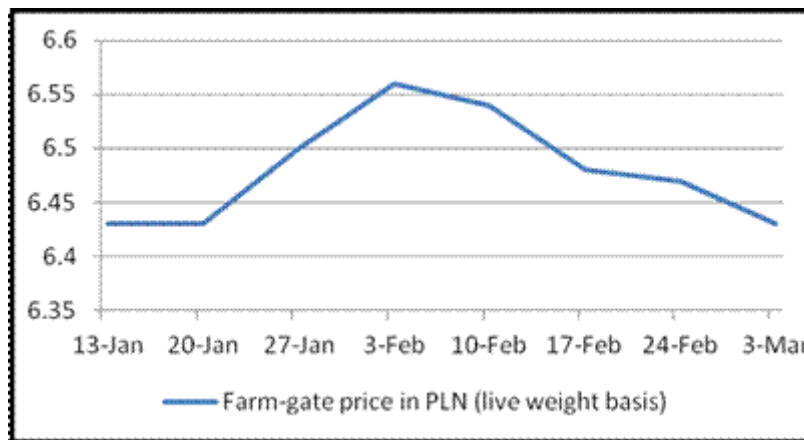
On March 5, 2013 the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) released results of its national audit in response to the adulteration issue of beef with horse meat. Provincial Veterinary Inspection Officials had notified local prosecutor offices of seven cases of incomplete or inadequate documentation found in food sector firms control until February 28. The National Institute of Veterinary in Pulawy had tested 126 samples for species verification through March 3, 2013. An additional 137 samples are undergoing testing currently. Veterinary Inspection field offices had audited 837 facilities. When counting facilities inspected multiple times, total audit numbers increase to 957 facilities.

The Veterinary Inspectorate investigation resulted with three positive samples tested for presence of horse protein. Two samples originated from products manufactured with raw material from Poland and the third from raw material sourced from an EU member state (unidentified). Quantitative testing is currently underway in order to measure percentage of adulteration of beef with horse meat in the market.

Trade reports the softening of the Polish beef market for all products with price declines significant in some regions of the country. Softening demand is reportedly due to the latest scandal involving adulterated beef products with horse meat, and the 1 January 2013 ban on ritual slaughter.

According to the weekly farm-price bulletin published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on March 3, 2013, the weekly average farm-gate price for cattle was 6.5 percent lower than reported a year ago.

Average farm-gate price for slaughter cattle in Poland (PLN/kilogram of live weight)  
(Jan 13 - March 3, 2013).



According to one industry source, in December 2012, slaughter cattle procured in Southern Poland for ritual slaughter and export to Turkey sold at PLN 6.0 (US\$ 1.9) per kilogram live weight. The year earlier value for such animal was PLN 7.2 (US\$ 2.2) per kilogram. The bottle neck in the market created by soft demand of a distrustful consumer coupled with the lost export market for beef will have longer term economic implications as the ability of farmers to retain livestock rather than move animals into market channels will be stressed by high feed costs occurring this time of year.

Polish Minister of Agriculture has emphasized publically that although responsibility for adulterating food falls on the producers and processors, there is no threat to health or life of consumers, because horse meat is a high-quality meat.

Please note: Export of Polish beef to the United States is restricted due to Poland's OIE BSE classification. Export of Polish pork and pork products to the United States remains subject to species verification requirements implemented in the early 1990's as a result of an adulteration issue involving meat of other species.