

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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United Arab Emirates

Post: Dubai

UAE Lifts Ban on U.S. Beef from Over 30 Month Old Animals

Report Categories:

Market Development Reports

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Report Highlights:

The Government of the UAE has lifted its ban on imports of U.S. beef from animals over 30 months old, effective January 24. The Office of Agricultural Affairs, Dubai, expects the liberalization of beef imports will further boost U.S. beef exports to the UAE which in 2011 reached an all time record at \$41 million.

Background Information:

On January 24, 2012, the UAE Government issued a decree that removed its restriction on U.S. beef and beef products from Animals over 30 months of age, which have in place since 2009. The removal of the restriction was the result of many years of sustained advocacy by U.S. Government Agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture, the State Department, as well as the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

The new decree also removes similar UAE restrictions on beef imports from other countries, including Canada and European Countries, except the United Kingdom.

U.S. Beef Exports to the UAE:

Despite the UAE restriction on importation of U.S. beef from cattle over 30 months old, over the past few years, U.S. beef exports to the UAE have been expanding. In 2011, exports reached an all time high of \$41 million compared to \$5.7 million in 2005. The Office of Agricultural Affairs, Dubai, expects the UAE market liberalization for beef will further boost U.S. beef exports to the country.

Chronology of events leading to the ban:

- I. In December 2003, following the first BSE case in Washington State, the UAE banned importation U.S. beef and beef products. .
- II. In September 2004, Post, in cooperation with FAS, U.S. Meat Export Federation and USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, organized a visit for UAE Government officials, representing UAE General Secretariat of Municipalities (GSM) and the Ministry of Agriculture (currently, Ministry of Environment and Water) to the United States, to meet with USDA officials, visit slaughter houses, as well as meet with representatives of U.S. Islamic centers in different states to review their Halal slaughter practices.
- III. In 2005, the USDA and the GSM officials negotiated with the UAE terms and conditions for lifting the ban on U.S. beef.
- IV. In May 2005, the UAE lifted its ban on U.S. beef from animals less than 30 months of age.
- V. In 2009, the UAE reinstated its import ban of beef from animals over 30 months old.

Current UAE beef import policy:

1. On January 24, 2012, the UAE Minister of Environment and Water (MOEW) issued Decree number 34 for 2012, updating decree number 555 for 2009, regarding the UAE import requirements for beef and beef products from countries that reported BSE cases.
2. The decree also removed restrictions on beef imports from animals over 30 months of age from several other countries such as Canada, Germany, Ireland, France and Holland.
3. Below is an unofficial translation of Decree number 34, prepared in house:

Ministerial Decree number (34) for 2012
Regarding the Modifying Decree number (555) for 2009
On the Requirements of Importing Beef from Countries
In which BSE Incidences has been Recorded

Ministry of Environment & Water,

Having reviewed the following:

Federal Law number (1) for 1972 with regards to the specialization of the ministries and the authorities of the ministers and its amendments;

Federal Decree number (6) for 1979 regarding the veterinary quarantine and its amendments;

Ministerial decree number (21) for 2009 regarding the organizational structure of the Ministry of Water & Environment and its amendments;

Ministerial decree number (460) for 2001 regarding the organizational structure of the veterinary quarantine system of the countries of the GCC;

Ministerial Decree number (18) for 2001 regarding banning the import of live cattle and its products from countries of the European Union, East Europe and Scandinavia.

Ministerial Decree number (555) for 2009 regarding the conditions of importing beef from countries in which BSE incidents have been recorded;

and based on:

the bulletin of the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) with regards to BSE;

the preoccupation of the Ministry to execute its strategic goals regarding its contribution to achieving the nation's food security; protecting public health and the requirements of national interest;

the following has been decided:

First Clause

Countries which have been banned from exporting beef to the UAE because of BSE must submit a request to lift the ban through the official channels to the Ministry of Environment & Water attaching all the documents and information which prove that the exporting country have fulfilled the following conditions:

1. The documents attached to the request must have complete information on the total number of cattle and number of cases, number of cows that have been examined since the disease was detected, results of the tests (positive or negative) and the procedures taken to contain the disease or to limit it.
2. A binding legislation must have been issued in the exporting country banning the use of feed containing ruminant (ground bones and meat MBM) and dried fats (graves) for feeding ruminants, as per the recommendations of the OIE.
3. Reporting the disease to the authorities must be obligatory in the exporting countries.
4. Committing to adopting BSE and other animal diseases surveillance program at all sites (abattoirs, farms, quarantines,...etc) on slaughtered and live cattle which show signs of disease of the nervous system appear or non-ambulatory.
5. The exporting countries must have a tracing for animals and their products, from their birth to slaughtering and their products export.
6. Abiding to apply HACCP at organizations working in the production of beef and exporting to the country (UAE).
7. If required, a visit by a UAE technical team to the exporting country will take place to ensure compliance with the above mentioned requirements.

Second Clause

When importing beef from countries complaining with conditions mentioned in the First Clause of this decree, the following is required:

- The shipment of the imported meat must be accompanied by the following documents:
 - a. A valid and authenticated veterinary certificate showing the following:
 - A statement that the beef comes from healthy animals/herd that are free of

diseases, especially BSE, and that they are of local origin and are not genetically modified;

- A statement that the animals were not fed with feed containing ruminants, with the exception of milk protein;
 - A statement that the animals have been slaughtered in approved facilities by the exporting country, and were examined before and after slaughtering by the concerned health authority at the exporting country;
 - In case imported beef is from cattle over 30 months of age; a statement confirming that the imported beef and its products were produced in a manner to ensure that they are free of risk materials; and that the beef does not contain meat whose bones have been mechanically removed;
 - A statement that the preparation took place under the supervision of the concerned health and veterinary authorities;
 - A Statement that the animals have been slaughtered according to Emirates Standards number 998 and 993, which pertain to the conditions of slaughtering according to the Islamic rule and under the supervision of an accredited by the UAE Islamic associations at the exporting country.
 - A statement that the meat has not been mixed with other animal products during the production and processing stages.
- b. A certificate of Origin.
- c. A Halal slaughter certificate issued by an Islamic center that is approved by the Ministry.

Third Clause

Beef ban will be lifted from countries that reported BSE cases after the ban on live cattle from those countries is lifted; provided they follow the conditions stipulated in the Second Clause of this decree.

Fourth Clause

All shipments coming into the country are subject to the quarantine procedures, according to the veterinary quarantine laws and decrees of the country (UAE).

Fifth Clause

The quarantine and food safety departments at the ministry, each in their specialization, must coordinate with the concerned authorities in the country to execute this decree.

Sixth Clause

All the authorities concerned in the country must execute this decree, each in their specialization; the

decree must be abided by from the date it is issued; all previous decrees that are in conflict or in juxtaposition with it are cancelled; and it must be published in the official gazette.

Issued on: 24/01/2012

Dr. Rashed Ahmed Bin Fahad
Minister of Environment & Water”

End of Quote

Actions taken by UAE and USDA Food Safety Authorities following the issuance of the Ministerial Decree:

1. Based on the clauses of Decree # 34, The Food Safety Department of the MOEW has updated its records and application mechanism by removing the 30 months of age rule to open the market for beef coming from animals of all ages from eligible countries.
2. FSIS Export Library has been updated, and the EV program requirement removed, accordingly.
3. U.S. beef exports to the UAE may now resume as per FSIS guidelines in its Export Information site.