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Change in Genetics Import Requirements

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Policy and Program Announcements

Dairy and Products

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Report Highlights:

In January 2016, Turkey's Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock (MinFAL) added new categories to their genetic requirements which broadened the variety of genetics which can be imported to Turkey such as sheep and goat embryos, semen of sport horses, sexed male semen and Holstein bull semen in the Top 100 list. The last mentioned new category allows bulls that are or were in the top 100 ranking list in their country at any time in the past 10 years to qualify without any technical requirement such as milk production.

In 2014, Turkey imported 4 million units of bull semen (worth \$10 million) and in 2015 Turkey imported almost 4.5 million units. Germany and Canada are the leading exporters to Turkey, while the Czech Republic and the United States the third and fourth. In 2015, the United States exported 381,000 units (worth \$1.3 million) of bovine genetics to Turkey.

General Information:

Turkey's Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock (MinFAL) has historically only allowed dairy genetics to come into the country with high milk yield as the defining trait, with a requirement for 'predictable transmissible ability' for milk of +1000. This policy was originally envisioned to improve milk yields in the national herd, but over time as this specific trait was selected for above all others, it has led to problems in fertility and productive life, as well as other management traits such as udder and leg problems. It severely limited the type of genetics which could be exported to Turkey and used by Turkish farmers.

Holstein is the most preferred breed for semen import. In 2014, Turkey imported 4 million units of bull semen worth with \$10 million. Approximately half of those were imported from Germany with 1.7 million units worth \$4 million. In 2014, Turkey imported 713,000 units of semen from the United States worth \$2 million. Canada was the third exporting country in 2014 with 500,000 units worth \$1.7 million.

In 2015, Turkey imported almost 4.5 million units of bull semen. Germany was the leading exporting country again with 1.3 million units worth \$3 million. Canada was the second with 1.2 million units worth \$3 million. The Czech Republic followed Canada with 425,000 units while the United States exported only 381,000 units worth \$1.3 million. Despite these figures, there is potential in Turkish market for expanding U.S. exports.

Table 1. The main countries exporting bovine semen to Turkey

| | Exporting Countries | Quantity (thousand units) |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 2014 | Germany | 1,700 |
| | The United States | 713 |
| | Canada | 500 |
| 2015 | Germany | 1,300 |
| | Canada | 1,200 |
| | Czech Republic | 425 |
| | The United States | 381 |

Source: Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, 2015

With this new change in the rules, as long as a country's average milk yield per cow annually is 8,500 kg, importers can now bring in semen from Holstein bulls as long as they have been on the country's top 100 bulls list in any of the past ten years (for the U.S. this means the top 100 TPI list). The country requirement of 8,500 kg average milk production is a limitation for some countries, but the United States and most of Europe meet this minimum requirement. TPI, Total Performance Index, is a selection index made up of a formula of twelve traits which have proven to be economically significant for enhancing producer profitability and the overall quality of the animal, and it is one of two main indexes used in the United States to rank top genetics. TPI is generally considered the industry standard, and is now used in multiple countries by many producers. It was intended to be used to rank Holstein cattle and assist dairy producers in identifying superior cattle that possess a combination of high production, sound conformation and desirable health and fertility. National indexes provide an easy way for the average farmer rank the sires (and cows) available for selection.

Turkey will continue to import bovine semen for the purpose of breeding within the scope of livestock improvement projects in Turkey. Domestic semen production is being carried out mostly by the stations affiliated with the Turkey National Breeder's Association (the bulls are imported) and accounts 20-25 percent of the total product used in the country. In 2015, it is estimated that 1.5 million doses of semen were produced.

Documentation for Import Application:

MinFAL provided a clear summary list of exactly which documents are needed for importation. The instructions with detailed information on documentation for import are published on the MinFAL website and are accessible with the link:

<http://www.tarim.gov.tr/HAYGEM/Belgeler/Talimatlar/2016%20YILI/The%20Mandate%20On%20The%20Principles%20And%20Procedures%20To%20Be%20Followed%20For%20The%20Imports%20Of%20Sperm,%20Ova%20And%20Embryos.pdf>

In summary, the documents required for import are:

- Letter of Application
- Proforma Invoice
- DNA profile of the sperm
- Certificate of Origin
- Sample or Proforma Veterinary Health Certificate
- Control Certificate
- Document regarding the imported sperm, ova and embryos are used in artificial insemination and embryo transfer applications in the exporter country
- Pedigree
- Letter of agreement: The importer companies shall make a distributorship agreement with the foreign company for the products they sell in the national market; they shall renew the agreement before the expiration date and shall submit the letter of agreement to the Ministry

Companies should note that Turkey requires a motile spermatozoa count for unsexed semen to be 7 million per straw post thaw; for sexed male/female semen, 1.5 million per straw.

Beef Semen Issue:

Genetic improvement in the beef sector in Turkey will become more important in the future, as Turkey continues to experience shortages of beef. The Turkish government has just started to encourage the producers to import beef breed semen and has put this idea into its 'strategic plan' and established the new criteria for feeder cattle semen on import to Turkey. The aim is to improve feeder cattle breed in Turkey and meet the public demand for beef. The new criteria can be viewed at the link:

<http://www.tarim.gov.tr/HAYGEM/Belgeler/Talimatlar/2016%20YILI/The%20Mandate%20On%20The%20Principles%20And%20Procedures%20To%20Be%20Followed%20For%20The%20Imports%20Of%20Sperm,%20Ova%20And%20Embryos.pdf>

IBR Issue:

No IBR (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis) antibody positive bulls qualify for semen exports to Turkey,

according to the health certificate which Turkey requires. Turkey requires a serological test (whole virus) on a blood sample on donor bulls to have a negative result. This means that bulls vaccinated against IBR are not able to be used for semen collection and export to Turkey.

The EU harmonized Turkish health certificate prohibits imports to Turkey from Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) positive bulls. Only semen processed, handled and stored in EU approved facilities can be exported to Turkey. The list approved for export to the EU and Turkey for beef bull semen is published here:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/docs/semen-ova_us_bov_scc.pdf