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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Chile

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Chile Takes Action to Protect Animals from Volcano Eruption

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) officials report that nearly 45,000 animals have been affected by the Calbuco volcano eruption in the Los Lagos Region (Region X) of Chile. The MOA Institute for Agricultural Development (INDAP) has been assisting by moving animals to alternative farms in nearby cities that are not affected.

General Information:

Over 2,000 farmers in the counties of Puerto Montt, Puerto Octay, Puerto Varas and Puyehue are reportedly affected by the recent eruptions of the Calbuco Volcano, according to the analysis of the Ministry of Agriculture's (MOA) Los Lagos Region ("Lakes" Region). The majority of the animals affected are cattle (for the dairy and livestock sectors) and smaller animals like sheep and goats. Because these animals graze in pastures that have been exposed and contaminated by ash from the volcano, they are considered to be at risk for a high heavy metals toxicity levels.

The MOA estimates that the number of cattle exposed is approximately 18,963 cattle, 11,612 sheep, 2,509 horses, 8,351 poultry and over 4 thousand other animals. Most of these animals are within a radius of 20 kilometers to the volcano and belong to small subsistence farmers who are without a capacity to move these animals to safe places and or provide the animals with alternative feed sources. Following a visit by Chilean Minister of Agriculture Carlos Furche to 10th region, the local MOA office reported that nearly 600 cattle had already been moved to an area west Puerto Varas where the volcano is not affected and feed is available. According to reports, some animals showed evidence of dehydration, fatigue and stress due to the change in their environment.

According to Consorcio Lechero (Dairy Association of Chile), only 2 dairy farms located in the Llifén area, approximately 200 km north of the Volcano, had some ash fallen on their pastures. Those farms are the only ones that reportedly had any ash out of all dairy farms that supply milk to Chile's dairy processors, and are not expected to have concerns with toxicity levels.