

Communiqué

CPC President Criticizes South Dakota Actions

Ottawa, September 21, 1998: “The inspection requirements established last week for vehicles carrying Canadian hogs into the state of South Dakota are totally unjustified, are based on faulty information, and, in our view, represent a violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)”, said Edouard Asnong, President of the Canadian Pork Council.

On September 15th, Bill Janklow, Governor of the State of South Dakota, announced they would be preventing trucks entering the state with Canadian swine which do not have with them certificates proving these animals were produced without use of certain veterinary products, all but one of which are not even available to Canadian hog farmers. That one, *dimetridazole*, is a product used primarily in turkeys but available in Canada for use by veterinarians for treating swine dysentery. The Canadian pork industry could very easily manage without that medication; however, the Canadian health department has found no valid reason to withdraw its approval.

“We had hoped that after some reflection on the erroneousness of this action, the Governor would revoke the requirements”, added Mr. Asnong. “Regretfully, it would appear that the quest for votes in fall elections seems to have taken precedence over both common sense and respect for international trade rules.”

Mr. Asnong added: “Canadian hogs are subject to stringent inspection standards including routine testing for antibiotics. The results of our food safety monitoring and surveillance programs are shared with the United States government under bilateral protocols. There is a long tradition of cooperation and mutual trust between our two countries in the area of food inspection, and neither of us should want to place that relationship at risk.”

Contrary to suggestions made by Governor Janklow, Canadian import requirements are not excessive relative to those of the United States. There have been no developments or changes in this situation that would give reason for the Governor to impose such time-consuming and expensive procedures on Canadian exporters.

“We can only conclude”, Mr. Asnong said, “that these steps have been taken purely to make it more difficult for South Dakota pork processors to purchase Canadian hogs. I hope Governor Janklow realizes that by restricting entry of Canadian hogs, he is also making it much harder for processing plants in the state to operate profitably.”

The CPC President pointed out that Canadian producers, like their U.S. counterparts, are having to endure severely depressed hog prices due to such factors as the substantial increase in pork production this year in North America in response to high demand last year in Asian markets that has since faltered due to the economic crisis there.

“We are very pleased that other U.S. states have decided against this step”, concluded Mr. Asnong, who farms with his family south of Montréal. “That confirms for us that they realize such arbitrary measures are unjustified, and likely not even within their authority. We will continue to work with our government and others to seek a resolution to this very unfortunate situation.”

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