



The Philippines re-opens market to Belgian beef following BSE ban

The Philippines has lifted the ban on beef and beef products from Belgium. This follows earlier decisions to lift the ban for a number of EU Member States. However, the ban has still not been lifted for some other EU Member States, even though they have the same BSE risk status. Interested EU Member States have to undergo a country-by-country procedure under the new guidelines for accreditation of foreign meat establishments, in force since January 2007, which are considered lengthy and non-transparent.

In 2000, the Philippines applied an import ban on beef of European origin, citing a risk of Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) without justifying its measure based on science. This measure also went beyond the international standards set by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and did not take into account the stringent control and surveillance measures in place in the European Union. It also discriminated against other non-EU countries with similar BSE risk status.

Since the introduction of the ban, the European Commission, the EC delegation and EU Member States have consistently raised this issue with the Philippines in all available fora, and in every bilateral meeting, at technical and political level. On these occasions, the European Commission requested the Philippines to lift the ban for all affected EU Member States as the measure is not justified and not in line with international standards. As a result the Philippines revised its import conditions in several steps and re-opened its market for several EU Member States.

The year preceding the ban, exports of European beef to the Philippines exceeded 26,000 tonnes.

The European Commission remains watchful that this opening translates into real trade opportunities. The European Commission, together with the EC Delegation in Manila, will also continue to raise this issue with the Philippines in order to re-open the market for all EU countries and to ensure that international guidelines are enforced. We also invite EU business to continue to inform us of any developments in this matter.

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