



India revises import conditions for hides and skins

On 10 June 2009, the Indian Ministry of Agriculture revised its import conditions for hides and skins, reflecting the concerns of EU industry and Member States, as well as those of other major suppliers of hides and skins. The European Commission welcomes these changes which will allow EU producers to continue exporting these products without undue restrictions. In 2007, the EU exported € 113 million worth of hides and skins to India.

In late 2008, India announced new import conditions for hides and skins which went beyond the international standards set by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). They included non-sanitary requirements which did not seem relevant. These requirements would have included, for example, the use of hides and skins only from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the exporting country, excessive treatment requirements and also quality aspects like being free from abscesses, wounds and burns.

Such import conditions are unnecessary, burdensome, and costly and risk to significantly reduce market opportunities for suppliers of hides and skins. For the EU in particular narrow origin requirements which limit exports to products obtained from animals born, raised, and slaughtered in the Member State of export, are in stark contradiction with the EU internal market and do not reflect how the EU industry operates, nor are they justified by sanitary considerations. Sanitary conditions for animal by-products like hides and skins are harmonised and equivalent across the EU. The EU ensures that imports comply with equivalent sanitary requirements.

The Commission expressed its concerns to India on many occasions. It organised pluri-lateral contacts, together with like-minded third countries and it provided India with detailed information on the EU sanitary requirements and controls for hides and skins. In the context of the Market Access Strategy, good cooperation between the European Commission services, the EC Delegation and EU Member States' Embassies, EU Member States and industry, both in Brussels and at the level of the market access team in New Delhi, ensured rapid reaction and a clear and consistent message, which have proved instrumental in achieving this success.

As a result, on 10 June 2009, India took the EU's concerns into account and published a revised version of the requisite sanitary certificate, which is now in line with the industry's international standards and consistent with OIE standards. This is welcome news for a sector in which there is considerable two-way trade. In 2007, India exported a total of €949 million of hides and skins and finished leather articles (of which €124 million of raw and treated skins) to the EU, while the EU exported €125 million of hides and skins and finished leather articles (of which €113 million of raw and treated hides and skins) to India.

DG TRADE C1 – Trade SPS team, EU Delegation New Delhi
For further information: (TRADE-SPS-EXPORTPROBLEMS@ec.europa.eu)