

## Brazilian beef must be banned

Contributed by Irish Farmers Association  
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IFA President Pdraig Walshe said the Minister for Agriculture Mary Coughlan has no option but to insist that the EU Commission impose an immediate ban on Brazilian beef imports. The IFA President has requested an urgent meeting with the Minister for Agriculture to discuss the staggering contents of the latest FVO report on the failure of Brazil to meet EU standards and food safety controls. Farm leaders and MEPs in the UK have also stepped up their calls for an import ban on Brazilian beef, following the new report on animal health controls by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office.

The report concluded that:

- 1) No systematic audit system for animal health has been established either at state or central level.
- 2) There is no programme to monitor the efficacy of foot and mouth disease vaccination in 2007.
- 3) The system to determine that animals have been resident in a foot and mouth-free region for 90 days before export - an EU requirement - is unreliable.
- 4) Meat from an animal which was not eligible for export has been exported to the EU and some official Brazilian veterinarians are not familiar with the traceability system in place.

Mr Walshe said the FVO had again found all of the shortcomings and deficiencies previously identified by the IFA and Farmers' Journal in Brazil of fallible cattle traceability, lack of adequate movement and border controls, irresponsible FMD controls and distressing health controls.

Pdraig Walshe said Minister Coughlan now has documented evidence that Brazil still fails to meet EU requirements. Minister Coughlan must insist that EU Health & Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou delivers on his commitment to impose a ban on Brazilian beef in light of the fact serious deficiencies previously identified by the FVO have not been corrected by the Brazilian authorities.

The IFA President said that if the EU is to retain credibility it must act immediately on the latest revelations from the FVO on the failure of Brazil to meet EU standards. "Commissioner Kyprianou now has no option but to act on his commitment and impose a ban", said Pdraig.

Mr Walshe said the FVO report had again highlighted a catalogue of serious problems with the standards in Brazil. The FVO concluded that as aspects of the identification system were inadequately implemented, this called into question the reliability of the 40-day and 90-day residency policy, which the Commission relies on to implement regionalization. The FVO also found more animals registered in the SISBOV database than were actually present on some farms.

They also found that the quality of ear tags was extremely poor. The individual identification was also illegible and a high percentage of ear tags were unaccounted for.

The report also stated "that the FVO found that animals were being moved from FMD restricted areas in a non-EU approved state to an EU approved state and sent for slaughter without respecting the 90 day residency". This is a clear Foot and Mouth Disease risk.

In one particular meat plant, an animal was declared non-EU eligible but its meat formed part of a consignment destined for the EU, again exposing Europe to unnecessary Foot and Mouth Disease risks.

The FVO report also found serious vulnerabilities in the vaccination procedures. The FVO report states that "no routine controls were being carried out by the competent authority on holdings to ensure proper vaccination in some states". The recommended vaccination programme was not followed and thus the level of herd immunity might not be sufficient to protect against FMD. The FVO observed that the FMD virus is still circulating in parts of Mato Gross do Sul.

The FVO concluded that the absence of a sufficient programme to monitor the efficiency of vaccination in 2007 jeopardizes the future certification of beef.