

Korea Announces Resumption of U.S. Boneless Beef Trade

In a statement distributed late last night, USDA announced that Korea has agreed to resume U.S. boneless beef imports from cattle less than 30 months of age. While this still does not represent a full resumption of trade, it does provide access to significant value for U.S. producers. In 2003, the U.S. imported around \$814 million worth of beef to South Korea, and boneless beef cuts accounted for nearly \$450 million of this total. When the FSIS Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect this announcement, we pass that information along.

In related news, U.S.–South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks resumed this week in Seattle. The U.S. government launched negotiations on an FTA with South Korea earlier this year. Currently, South Korea's average tariff on beef imports is 40 percent. NCBA supports the launch of this FTA with South Korea, pending the re-opening of the South Korean market to U.S. beef, elimination of tariffs, and resolution of important sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues.

The USDA statement is available below.

Statement By Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns Regarding U.S. Beef Trade With Korea
September 7, 2006

"Korea today announced that it would resume the importation of U.S. boneless beef from cattle less than 30 months of age. Although the agreement was signed back in January, several months of cooperative effort between our two countries have been necessary, which included two visits by Korean audit teams to confirm the efficacy of the U.S. inspection system."

"Korea is an important beef market for us. In 2003, the United States exported more than \$814 million worth of beef to Korea, with boneless beef accounting for \$449 million."

"Trade resumption in boneless beef is the first step in normalizing trade of beef and beef products with Korea. We look forward to expanding our access to the Korean market and other export markets to achieve trade that is consistent with international guidelines."

"We are mindful that significant technical issues exist that must be resolved. We will continue to work with Korea to address these matters in the coming days."

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<http://hill.beef.org/pdfs/policyupdate.pdf>