

## **Mexico Resumes Live Cattle Imports of U.S. Dairy Heifers**

Yesterday, Secretary Johanns announced that Mexico would again begin importation of some live registered dairy heifers from the United States. As Johanns stated, yesterday's announcement to begin accepting registered dairy heifers under 24 months of age is the first step toward full restoration of live cattle trade between the U.S. and Mexico. Timing for when live beef cattle exports could resume is still quite uncertain. Regaining access to Mexico for breeding cattle is obviously a priority that we're working hard on. Our understanding is that the Mexican position is that full resumption of trade in breeding stock from the U.S. to Mexico is dependent upon full trade harmonization with Canada, and is thus tied to completion of a second USDA Minimum Risk Rule. As things develop, we'll keep you posted.

USDA's full press release is available below.

### **MEXICO OPENS MARKETS TO U.S. DAIRY HEIFERS**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 4, 2006--Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced that Mexico will resume trade in U.S. dairy heifers under 24 months of age.

"I am pleased with this first step in reestablishing cattle trade with Mexico, but I remain committed to a broader resumption of cattle trade between our countries," said Johanns. "My goal is to restore the once-vibrant live cattle commerce between the United States and Mexico and to do so in accordance with science-based international guidelines."

Under the agreement announced today, U.S. producers will be able to export dairy heifers to Mexico that are under 24 months of age and registered with a purebred dairy breed association or the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, a national dairy producer cooperative. Shipments to Mexico can begin on Oct. 4. The dairy heifers will be individually identified as they depart the United States. Their identification information will be entered into the Mexican animal identification system for purposes of maintaining these animals under bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) surveillance.

Mexico closed its market to U.S. dairy heifers following the December 2003 find of BSE in Washington state. In March 2004, Mexico opened its market to boneless U.S. beef from animals under 30 months of age, and in February 2006, the country opened its market to U.S. bone-in beef from animals under 30 months of age.

In 2003, the United States exported \$103 million worth of dairy heifers to Mexico.

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom>. Also, anyone with an e-mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to [mlyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov](mailto:mlyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov) and leave the subject blank. In the message, type subscribe press\_releases.

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