



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Commission welcomes the US Rule announcement to bring the US legislation in line with international standards for BSE**

The European Commission welcomes the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) rule announcement to bring the US legislation in line with international standards for BSE. This will mean that EU beef and other bovine products will again be allowed for US export. The US market has been closed since January 1998 when the US imposed a ban on EU beef on BSE grounds. The re-opening is a welcome, albeit late, step to abolish the unjustified ban and to re-establish normal trading conditions.

This action will be published in the *Federal Register* soon. The rule becomes effective 90 days after publication.

### **Background**

The US market has been closed to any EU beef, including deboned beef, since 1997, when the US introduced import restrictions on beef, sheep and goats (ruminant animals) and their products on the basis of BSE concerns. These measures went beyond the standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) according to which, for example, deboned skeletal muscle beef is safe and can be freely traded from all countries.

In addition, the OIE has evaluated the BSE risk status of EU Member States. In recognition of the EU's enormous efforts and investment to control and eradicate BSE, almost all EU Member States have the same or a better risk status than most countries in the world. EU beef is safe.

These standards were established in 2005. The EU expects that remaining import restrictions on EU sheep and goat products will be lifted soon as well and the US import conditions be fully aligned with international standards shortly.

The EU internal market has delivered a high level of food safety for consumers both in the EU and abroad, based on international standards and solid science. The agriculture and food sectors have to be able to capitalize on this achievement. This market opening also sends an important signal to the EU's trading partners worldwide that EU beef is safe, and that imports of EU beef should resume quickly.

**For more information:** Commission TTIP website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

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