

**UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADA REGARDING BOVINE
SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE)**

Statement by Canada to the meeting of 29-30 June 2005

The following communication, dated 30 June 2005, is circulated at the request of the Delegation of Canada.

1. At the March 2005 SPS Committee meeting, Canada advised of its intention to notify a draft revised import policy related to BSE. This policy has now been notified in G/SPS/N/CAN/244. This draft import policy closely adheres to the new science-based standards of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), as adopted at the 73rd General Session of the OIE last month in Paris.

2. Canada's existing BSE import policy permits the importation of live ruminants and most products derived from them only after the exporting country has been officially recognized by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as BSE-free, following a risk assessment using a harmonized approach developed jointly by Canada, the United States and Mexico. A limited range of commodities are exempt from BSE-specific conditions regardless of the BSE-disease status of the exporting country.

3. However, we recognize that international scientific understanding of BSE and the available measures to mitigate its transmission have evolved substantially in recent years, which has resulted in refinements in the relevant international standards. Consequently our existing policy has been determined to be more restrictive than the current international standards which provide the scientific basis to protect human and animal health while permitting safe trade.

4. The proposed import policy, which was notified to the WTO on 25 May 2005, is based largely on the newly adopted OIE guidelines for BSE, and reflects current scientific understanding of the measures necessary to protect human and animal health. Once implemented, the revised policy will maintain Canada's appropriate level of protection but will do so in a less trade restrictive manner.

5. This policy provides a framework to assess the BSE-risk status of a country and a range of applicable measures to ensure that the likelihood of importing the BSE-agent leading to the exposure of humans and animals is negligible. The conditions are specific for BSE in bovine animals only. It is important to note that, before a particular commodity can be imported, other relevant conditions must still be met, for example, the evaluation and approval of the meat inspection system of a country and specific measures for other animal diseases of concern.

6. In the same manner that Canada is revising its import policy to reflect the new science-based standards as adopted by the OIE, we ask our trading partners to base their measures on these standards as well. As part of the new OIE guidelines, boneless meat from animals less than 30 months of age is

now included in the OIE list of commodities that should be eligible for safe trade whether or not a country has confirmed cases of BSE. Moreover, science-based standards have been elaborated for safe trade in other commodities including bone-in meat and meat from animals over 30 months of age and live animals with additional certification guarantees in recognition of the effectiveness of control measures in place.

7. We conclude by noting that Canada, specifically the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, stands prepared to certify Canadian exports of a full range of edible meat and meat products as well as by-products, in accordance with OIE guidelines, as being produced in a manner which removes specified risk materials (SRMs). In addition, Canada can certify that exports of live animals were born after the implementation of an effective feed ban and that a traceability system is in place that ensures the ability to certify animals to their herd of birth.
