

SLAUGHTER OF IMPORTED BREEDING CATTLE

Statement by Bolivia at the Committee Meeting
of 28 February and 1 March 2007

The following communication, received on 1 March 2007, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Bolivia.

1. We first of all thank the delegation of Mexico for its report, submitted under item "Other issues".
2. We wish to remind the Committee that Mexico stated its concerns regarding this matter at the Committee's formal meetings in March 2005 and June 2006. In response, Bolivia reported that its health authorities had had 25 head of cattle from Mexico, originally intended for showing at a fair, slaughtered for sanitary reasons. The measure had been taken because it was established that the animals had not been imported in accordance with the applicable regulations and after completion of the necessary technical and diplomatic steps to have the animals re-exported – a request that Mexico refused, because it considered Bolivia as a country at risk from foot-and-mouth disease. We also recall that after the statements made at the March 2005 meeting, at which the Mexican delegation first raised the issue before this Committee, Mexico thanked Bolivia for the information it had provided and requested that the issue be closed (see paragraphs 45 to 47 of the Secretariat's report of the meeting (G/SPS/R/36)).
3. It is important to point out that one of the reasons why the measure was applied was that those responsible for importing the cattle did not have the relevant health permit. Prior to granting a permit, and because the importation in question was unusual in that it was the first time that cattle of this type was being imported from Mexico, Bolivia's official sanitary service, pursuant to international procedures and guidelines, should have carried out a risk analysis for bovine spongiform encephalopathy. This could not be done because those concerned did not submit all the updated information required.
4. As a result of the incident, the Mexican authorities took action at both diplomatic and technical levels, strongly urging that Bolivia fully and officially recognize the whole of Mexican territory as free from bovine spongiform encephalopathy.
5. In this regard, we wish to put forward the following comments:
 - For the purpose of recognition of a territory's sanitary status, it is important to consider the relevant evaluations and resolutions of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), which is the scientific reference organization, and necessarily

those issued by the groups of experts on the matter from the regional organizations of which Bolivia is a member, as well as other existing studies.

- Bolivia is in the process of gathering all the supporting data necessary to secure recognition by the OIE and demonstrate that the country is entirely free from bovine spongiform encephalopathy, which is consistent with the sanitary status of the region to which it belongs.

6. Furthermore, we draw the Committee's attention to the fact that Bolivia has always been committed to addressing this issue, and hence various bilateral meetings have been held with the Mexican health authorities, as well as through diplomatic channels.

7. As to the claim filed by the affected enterprise, the matter is proceeding in accordance with Bolivia's legal procedures and domestic regulations. However, on the basis of information received from the competent authorities, we know that the enterprise has not pursued the judicial process and the latter has therefore not been defined.

8. Lastly, Bolivia reiterates its interest in continuing to deal with the issue with its Mexican counterparts in the framework of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the Economic Complementarity Agreement (FTA No. 31) concluded between the two countries.
