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European Union

Poultry and Products

EU bans U.S. poultry over Avian Influenza

2004

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Report Highlights:

The European Union has banned trade in all eggs, poultry products and live poultry from U.S. after the outbreak of a highly pathogenic Avian Influenza in Texas. The ban will remain in place until March 23rd while the Commission gathers information on the situation before reviewing the decision.

Officials in Texas have said the strain in Texas was considered a low health threat to humans since it is a different strain than the Avian Influenza outbreak in South East Asia.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E2]

The European Commission has banned imports of live chickens, meat products and eggs from the United States after the discovery of Avian Influenza in Texas.

A Texas chicken flock was diagnosed with a highly pathogenic form of Avian Influenza on Monday, February 23rd 2004. Officials are monitoring farmworkers in the area as a precaution against the first U.S. outbreak of a severe form of the disease in 20 years.

If U.S. State and Federal authorities are successful, containment of disease is likely. With containment achieved APHIS would forward documentation to the EC to include on the agenda for the Standing Committee for Food chain and Animal Health, March 2-3, 2004.

The ban takes effect immediately and the EU's regulatory committee has ten days in which to confirm it. The measures will be applicable until March 23rd. The Commission said it planned to adopt its decision to ban the imports later on Tuesday and Health Commissioner David Byrne would inform EU agriculture ministers, who were meeting in Brussels.

EU imports of live birds, live poultry, ratites, farmed and wild feathered game birds, fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products consisting of or containing meats of these species, hatching eggs and eggs for human consumption from all over the U.S. are being banned.

Certain heat-treated products can however enter the EU. Products originating from the U.S. that have undergone a treatment according to the methods prescribed by the Commission Decision 97/222/EC are not banned. Poultry meat products that can enter the EU are products that have been either sterilized or heated to 70 degrees Celsius throughout the meat.

The EU imports 25 per cent of its eggs from U.S. – a total of 13,000 tonnes or €20 million in trade. Half of those eggs are for hatching while the rest are eaten. In particular, Europe relies on America for turkey eggs and chicks, with the total value of day old chick imports at €2.5 million.

Officials said the strain in Texas was considered a low health threat to humans and different from the one blamed for the recent deaths of at least 22 people in Asia.

The EU had an outbreak of Avian Influenza in 2003, which resulted in the culling of 30 million birds in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. Avian Influenza caused a huge financial loss to the sector in the Netherlands. As a consequence of Avian Influenza outbreaks, the Dutch poultry sector is refocusing on the production of fresh poultry meat and free-range eggs for the EU market.

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Report Number	Title	Date Released
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These reports can be accessed through our website www.useu.be/agri/organic.html or through the FAS website http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/attacherep/default.asp .		