



U.S. and Russia Agree on Reopening Pork Market to U.S.

Compiled by Staff

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Washington, March 5. The United States and Russia have reached an agreement to reopen the Russian market to U.S. pork and pork products, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today. As we reported in this week's edition of *Agri-Pulse*, A U.S. delegation led by Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services James Miller and Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Agricultural Affairs Jim Murphy has been meeting with Russian officials in Moscow since Monday to discuss trade issues related to pork and poultry. USDA said the negotiations on poultry have been "constructive and technical discussions will continue."

"Exports are extremely important to the U.S. pork industry," Vilsack said. "Reopening the market with Russia - our fifth largest market last year - is excellent news for American hog producers."

The U.S. exported nearly 20% of our pork production in 2009. Russia imported \$257 million worth -- six percent -- of U.S. pork and pork variety meat exports last year.

The USDA and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative have been in negotiations with the Russian Veterinary Service since December 2009 when Russia notified USDA of its intent to restrict pork shipments from 13 U.S. pork plants, which accounted for more than 90 percent of U.S. pork exports to Russia. These negotiations led to the development of a new veterinary certificate to ensure that pork exports from the United States meet specific Russian microbiological and tetracycline-group antibiotic residue requirements.

The next step is for U.S. plants that want to export to Russia to apply for approval with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). AMS, in collaboration with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), has developed an Export Verification (EV) program for pork to Russia to address specific product requirements.

Export Verification programs are designed to facilitate the marketing and the export of U.S. products. Companies wishing to participate in USDA's EV Programs must meet the specified product requirements through a USDA Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program. The QSA

Program ensures that the specified product requirements are supported by a documented quality management system. Products produced under an approved EV Program are eligible to be issued an FSIS Export certificate. AMS is expected to approve the first plants as early as next week. FSIS will then provide Russian authorities with a list of approved U.S. pork facilities.

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