



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

1400 Independence  
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Washington, D.C.  
20250

**JUN 22 2017**

Dr. Odilson Luiz Ribeiro e Silva  
Under Secretary of the Office of International Affairs (SRI)  
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA)  
Esplanada dos Ministerios, Bloco D. Edificio Sed 3 andar, Sala 300  
70.043-900 Brasilia, DR BRAZIL

Dear Dr. Ribeiro e Silva,

I am writing to inform you that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is taking immediate action to suspend the eligibility of imports of all raw intact beef products from Brazil. FSIS is taking this action to protect U.S. public health in response to a serious trend of food safety violations identified at port-of-entry (POE) during reinspection of Brazilian product. These POE violations correlate to preliminary observations made during our most recent in-country audit, which included weaknesses in Brazil's government oversight of sanitation (product handling) and post-mortem carcass inspection; inadequate verification of sanitary dressing procedures; and lack of conflict of interest controls between inspection personnel and establishment management.

As FSIS indicated in previous letters, FSIS has observed repeated import violations such as abscesses, ingesta, and unidentified foreign material of raw intact beef product from seven Brazilian establishments (SIF 421, 431, 847, 2500, 2543, 4238, and 4400). The rate of physical examination failures at POE for raw intact beef from Brazil is 11.1%, which is significantly higher than the combined violation rate for similar product from all other eligible countries exporting product to the U.S. during the same period of time. In addition, FSIS has identified violations for multiple establishments indicating a system-wide problem.

As you know, on June 16, 2017, Brazil notified FSIS that they suspended export authorization from five of the aforementioned establishments (SIF 431, SIF 847, SIF 2500, SIF 2543, and SIF 4400). While we appreciate the actions taken by Brazil to control export of product from these establishments and noted the self-suspension of these establishments by Brazil on our website, we identified additional violations even after the self-suspension action was taken. As a result, we have concluded that the circumstances and risk to public health warrant a more rigorous response, which is suspension of all raw intact beef imports.

To resume shipping this product, Brazil needs to carry out a comprehensive review of its food safety inspection program to determine the systemic issues that need to be addressed by the Central Competent Authority (CCA) to ensure that all establishments exporting raw intact beef to the U.S. meet FSIS equivalence requirements.

Dr. Odilson Luiz Ribeiro e Silva  
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We appreciate your cooperation with this public health matter and we look forward to working with you to resolve this situation. If there are any questions, please contact me directly at (202) 720-7025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carmen Rottenberg', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Carmen Rottenberg  
Deputy Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service