



SOUTH KOREA – NEWS SCAN

Uruguay aims to become a major player in Korean beef market 2009/01

Korean Health Inspectors have fast-tracked approval of Uruguayan grass-fed beef for the Korean market. The inspectors arrived in Montevideo on December 7th, and by December 20th, Uruguayan officials were announcing that approval had been given to start selling their beef to Korea.

This is a stark contrast to Canada's quest for Korean market access. Inspectors reached Canada in November, only to have Canada's latest case of BSE be announced while they were still in the country. Nothing has been said about how this event will delay Canada-Korea talks, or for how long.

Uruguay was already free to send cooked or processed meat to Korea, and feels that this latest approval is the next stage to dominating the grass-fed portion of the beef market in the Asian country.

"The best markets to export to in the world are Japan and Korea," said the president of government-run Uruguayan Meat Institute. "We have bet quite heavily on getting into that market."

Uruguay is the world's eighth largest beef exporter, just behind seventh place Canada, and is seeking to grow their exports further to net importers like Korea by emphasizing their environmental policies (third out of 146 countries for sustainability) and foot-and-mouth disease-free status, unlike its neighbors Brazil and Argentina. Beef sales account for a fifth of Uruguay's exports.

Sources:

Bloomberg, December 5, 2008.

Farming UK, December 20, 2008.

http://beefmagazine.com/mag/beef_looming_large viewed January 9, 2008