

*Fighting for the U.S. Cattle Producer!*



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June 1, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

**Sent via facsimile and U.S. Mail: 202-720-6314**

**Re: R-CALF USA Commends USDA for Strengthening Import Restrictions to Prevent Brucellosis Introduction from British Columbia, Canada**

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of the thousands of U.S. cattle-producing members of R-CALF USA, thank you for responding quickly to the recent discovery of three cows imported into the United States from British Columbia, Canada, that were found to be reactors for brucellosis.

In addition to the positive action you quickly took on May 28, 2010 to require sexually intact bovines that have resided in British Columbia, Canada, since March 25, 2010, to be tested negative for brucellosis as a precondition to entry into the United States, we respectfully urge you to further strengthen U.S. disease protections by: 1) making the brucellosis testing requirements permanent; 2) expanding the brucellosis testing requirements to include the entire country of Canada; and 3) expanding U.S. testing requirements by also requiring that all cattle imported into the United States be tested negative for bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB).

As R-CALF USA documented in its February 8, 2010, presentation to USDA officials, the United States has the weakest brucellosis and bovine TB requirements for cattle imported into the United State from Canada when compared to other countries that purport to also allow the importation of Canadian cattle. For example, on Page 10 of R-CALF USA's February 8, 2010 presentation to USDA, R-CALF USA provided a chart showing that unlike the U.S., 16 countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Mexico, Russia and South Korea, all require mandatory brucellosis testing and mandatory bovine TB testing of Canadian cattle.

It is unconscionable that the United States – the largest beef producing nation in the world – with a widely dispersed cattle industry that is intrinsically important to the economic wellbeing of rural communities all across America, continues to have among the weakest disease-related import standards for foreign animal diseases. R-CALF USA's recent letter to you dated May 18, 2010 points out six specific weaknesses in United States' disease prevention policies that significantly increase the risk that dangerous foreign animal diseases will be introduced into the United States through imports.

The Honorable Tom Vilsack

June 1, 2010

Page 2

We greatly appreciate your responsible action taken May 28, 2010 to strengthen the United States' defense against the introduction of brucellosis from Canada and we encourage you, in the strongest way possible, to continue taking decisive action to proactively address the six other known and significant weaknesses that we identified in our letter to you dated May 18, 2010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. M. Thornsberry". To the right of the signature, there are some initials that appear to be "DVM".

R.M. Thornsberry, D.V.M.  
President, R-CALF USA Board of Directors

Cc: Edward Avalos, Under Secretary, USDA  
John Ferrell, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA  
Dr. John Clifford, APHIS  
State Animal Health Officials