



## The Philippines re-opens market to beef from the United Kingdom following BSE ban

At the end of July 2010, the Philippines lifted its ban on imports of beef and beef products from the United Kingdom. This follows earlier decisions to lift the ban on imports from a number of other EU Member States.

In 2000, the Philippines imposed an import ban on beef of European origin, citing a risk of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) without providing any scientific justification for the measure. This measure went beyond the international standards set by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and did not take into account the stringent control and surveillance measures in place in the European Union.

Since the introduction of the ban, the European Commission, the EU Delegation and EU Member States have consistently raised this issue with the Philippines in all available fora, and in every bilateral meeting, at technical and political level. On these occasions, the European Commission requested the Philippines to lift the ban for all affected EU Member States. As a result, the Philippines revised its import conditions and over a period re-opened its market to most EU Member States. However, the ban remains in force for imports from Spain and Portugal. These countries still have to undergo separate procedures for accreditation of Foreign Meat Establishments, which are considered lengthy and non-transparent.

In the year 2000, before the introduction of the ban, exports of European beef to the Philippines exceeded 19,000 tonnes and were valued at over 24 million Euros.

The European Commission hopes that this development will allow UK exporters to re-establish their pre-ban export levels. It will continue to raise this issue with the Philippines in order to re-open the market for imports from the remaining two EU countries and to ensure that international guidelines are enforced. EU businesses are invited to inform the Commission of any new developments in this matter.

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