

U.S. Beef Exporters' Joint Statement on Expanded Access to the Taiwan Market

As representatives of the nation's beef exporters, the American Meat Institute (AMI), the National Meat Association (NMA) and the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) welcome the October 22 announcement by the Taiwan Department of Health (DOH) of the "Amendment to the Import Requirements on U.S. Beef and Beef Products." When implemented, this protocol will expand market access for U.S. beef and beef products in recognition that all U.S. beef and beef products are safe, regardless of the age of the cattle from which they are derived. This science-based decision to expand market access reflects DOH's conclusion that U.S. measures related to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) are effective. DOH's decision also conforms to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) BSE guidelines.

Notwithstanding the fact that U.S. beef and beef products from cattle of any age are safe, in order to ensure a smooth transition for expanded trade, U.S. exporters have decided as a transitional measure to initially export only U.S. beef and beef products derived from cattle less than 30 months in age to Taiwan. We understand that 180 days after the entry into force of the "Protocol of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)-Related Measures for the Importation of Beef and Beef Products for Human Consumption from the Territory of the Authorities Represented by the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT)," consultations will take place between United States and Taiwan authorities.

AMI, NMA and USMEF are sending a letter today to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack stating the following:

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing to you today on behalf of the U.S. beef exporting industry regarding access to the Taiwan market. We welcome the October 22 announcement by Taiwan's Department of Health (DOH) that Taiwan will expand access to its market to permit imports of U.S. beef and beef products consistent with the guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

While U.S. exporters are confident that all beef and beef products produced in the United States are safe regardless of age, the U.S. beef exporting industry is prepared to temporarily limit beef exports to Taiwan to products from cattle less than thirty months of age under a program verified by USDA as a transitional measure to ensure an orderly expansion to a full market opening.

To facilitate this commitment, U.S. exporters have requested that as soon as the "Protocol of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)-Related Measures for the Importation of Beef and Beef Products for Human Consumption from the Territory of the Authorities Represented by the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT)," which allows for expansion of market access for U.S. beef, becomes effective, the U.S. Government establish an age-

verification Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program for Taiwan. USDA AMS has already confirmed that it is taking the necessary steps to establish this QSA program.

U.S. beef exporters are committed to being responsible participants and stakeholders in Taiwan's marketplace. We value our relationships with our Taiwan customers, who purchased \$128 million worth of U.S. beef in 2008, and are committed to meeting their needs.

In the future, we look forward to offering the full range of U.S. beef and beef products to the Taiwan market. We will work closely with our customers in Taiwan, as well as the United States and Taiwan authorities, to enable us to do so as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

J. Patrick Boyle, President and CEO, American Meat Institute

Barry L. Carpenter, CEO/Executive Director, National Meat Association

Philip M. Seng, President and CEO, U.S. Meat Export Federation