



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News advisory
3/04/04

Contact: Gilbert Gallegos
505-476-2217

Governor Bill Richardson working to convince Mexico To fully lift ban on cattle from the U.S.

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson said today he is pleased that Mexican officials have taken a step toward lifting the ban on U.S. beef, and he is working with Mexico to lift the broader ban on cattle.

“I have worked constantly with leaders from Mexico and other countries to ease their fears about the quality of U.S. beef following the limited discovery of Mad Cow disease in cattle that entered the country from Canada,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “I’m pleased to see that we are making progress. I am protecting an important part of New Mexico’s agricultural economy.

“Mexico understands the Mad Cow disease was an isolated incident, and I’m confident Mexicans will lift the ban on cattle soon.”

After learning of Mexico’s decision this week to re-open the Mexican market for U.S. beef exports, Governor Richardson directed New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Miley Gonzalez to work with leaders from the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora to open their markets for other U.S. products, including cattle.

Mexico’s Agriculture Secretary Javier Usabiaga, who has spoken several times with Governor Bill Richardson, announced Wednesday that Mexico will allow exports to Mexico of boneless beef products from animals of less than 30 months of age.

Secretary Gonzalez is sending a letter to Senator Jeffery Jones from Chihuahua, who sits on the federal committee in Mexico City that will determine the release date for live cattle movement. Secretary Gonzalez is asking for the Senator's assistance in expediting the lifting of the ban on live breeding cattle to Mexico from New Mexico, where about \$3 million in sales are pending and the breeding cycle is fast approaching. Most sales are destined to cattle growers in the border states of Chihuahua and Sonora.

The letter will also be sent to the Secretaries of Agriculture in Chihuahua and Sonora.

Governor Richardson and Secretary Gonzalez have met with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman and ambassadors from South Korea and Japan to emphasize that New Mexico beef is safe and not contaminated.

#30#