

Cattle supply secured, local parties pleased



illustration : Indonesian cattle vessel. Photo : thejakartapost.com

Jakarta (10/2/2016) - The government has locked in a supply of beef cattle from East Nusa Tenggara with the signing of partnerships with 13 providers in the province.

The cattle providers will sell the livestock at market price directly to buyers in Jakarta.

Agriculture Minister Amran Sulaiman said local businessmen had committed to supplying 1,000 head of cattle each month, most of which would be transported to Jakarta by sea on KM Camara Nusantara 1.

“We already have a one-year program with local cattle businessmen,” Amran said on Tuesday. The minister said East Nusa Tenggara was able to supply more than 60,000 cattle each year to high beef-consuming areas such as Greater Jakarta. But, for the sake of maintaining the cattle population, the area should only send around 30-40 percent of that capacity to Jakarta, he said.

On Tuesday, the ministry welcomed the second arrival of 299 cattle from East Nusa Tenggara at Tanjung Priok port in North Jakarta. On the way to Jakarta, the livestock vessel KM Camara Nusantara 1 dropped 33 head of cattle at Tanjung Perak port in Surabaya, East Java, and 167 in Cirebon, West Java.

The livestock vessel was set to load cattle from East Nusa Tenggara at the end of December but the reportedly left empty after local farmers and businessmen refused to sell their cattle to the State Logistics Agency (Bulog) at Rp 35,000 (US\$2.57) per kilogram live weight, much lower than the price paid by private shippers. To attract the cattle businessmen, the government then guaranteed that the cattle entrepreneurs could sell their stock directly to buyers in Jakarta, a policy which was widely accepted.

KM Camara Nusantara 1, operated by state shipping company PT Pelayaran Nasional Indonesia (Pelni), first arrived in East Nusa Tenggara on Dec. 12 as part of the government’s maritime highway program. *To the next page.....*

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INDONESIA THIS WEEK

The vessel, serving the Jakarta-East Nusa Tenggara route, was initially supposed to transport cattle bought by Bulog from farmers and businessmen in East Nusa Tenggara to Jakarta in order to help stabilize beef supplies and prices.

Aside from the partnership, Minister Amran also said the government planned to add seven more vessels, the construction of which is expected to finish this year.

"We made the request to the Transportation Ministry two months ago. Hopefully it can be gradually finished this year," he said.

To further secure the supply, the ministry also aims to increase the country's cattle population, which has decreased by more than 3 million head of cattle since 2012.

Ministry data shows that the archipelagic country's cattle population stood at 15.98 million in 2012.

Director general of livestock Muladno said the ministry aimed to add around 900,000 cattle through the artificial-insemination program in the next two years.

The ministry also claimed that the program would eventually affect the soaring beef prices, with domestic beef expected to be sold at Rp 85,000 per kilogram to consumers. The beef price reportedly hit Rp 140,000 per kilogram this month. "But it will take time, not just one or two weeks. Price disparity is a problem that has lasted for decades," Amran said.

Meanwhile, PD Dharma Jaya president director Marina Ratna Dwi Kusumajati said Jakarta needed 650 cattle per day and that the company's current shipment of 100 would not affect the price much.

"Around 97 percent of that daily demand is imported," she said. The ministry is aiming for 81 percent domestic beef production this year. (*thejakartapost.com*)

Cattle set to sail in April: Indonesia to extend validity of cattle import permits

The live cattle trade is upbeat following indications that Indonesia will extend the validity of cattle import permits from three months to four months.

There was growing concern within the industry that there would be no cattle shipped to Indonesia in April, because the original 200,000 permits issued at the start of the year were valid only until the end of March.

Speaking to ABC Rural, Alison Penfold from the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council said the Trade Ministry had signed off on the revised regulations to extend the validity of the permits, and those regulations would now be lodged with the Ministry of Justice.

"The completion of this process would see the current permits recognised till the end of April, so turning them from three month to a four month permit," Ms Penfold said. "And also for future permits to be issued on a trimester, four monthly basis.

"That's the information we have, we won't receive direct confirmation from Indonesia, but we have received information to that affect, which certainly is a good indication that our views have been heard and responded to."

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The planned change would mean Indonesia would issue permits every year in January, May and September, and according to earlier reports in Indonesian media, this year could see a total of 600,000 permits issued.

Ms Penfold said cattle exporters had been "cautious" about how they were approaching April, and would no doubt welcome Indonesia's decision to revise the permit system.

With cattle proving hard to find across northern Australia, an extra month to fill Indonesia's order for 200,000 head will help.

Ms Penfold said the switch to trimester permits is welcome, but industry will continue to push the benefits of moving to yearly permits.

(*abc.net.au*)

VIETNAM THIS WEEK

US – Viet Nam's top trade partner

HA NOI (13/2/2016) – The US has become Viet Nam's leading trade and investment partner, which has been reflected through impressive trade values between the two countries over recent years. Bilateral trade has expanded from zero since the day Viet Nam and the US normalised their diplomatic ties 20 years ago to US\$36.3 billion in 2014. The figure is expected to hit \$40 billion in 2015.

According to Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh, among the free trade agreements Viet Nam has engaged in, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement is expected to afford favourable conditions for Vietnamese exports. Nguyen Duy Khien, head of the American Market Department under the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), said Viet Nam shipped \$30.6 billion worth of goods to the US in 2014, up 24 per cent against the previous year.

According to the MoIT, Viet Nam began to access the US market in 1995. Viet Nam's export turnover to the country reached \$800 million in 2000 – the year the Viet Nam-US Bilateral Trade Agreement was signed. The US has become Viet Nam's largest importer, purchasing garments, electronic products, footwear, rice and fish from the Southeast Asian nation. In the sphere of investment, the US ranked seventh among the countries and territories investing in Viet Nam with a total direct investment of \$10.7 billion by June this year.

Vu DucGiang, President of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association, said Viet Nam was the world's

world's fifth largest garment-textile exporter, and the US remained the country's top market in this field. However, the garment-textile and footwear sectors are forecast to face difficulties as a result of Viet Nam's TPP membership as the US has initiated the "yarn forward" rule of origin.

In order to benefit from tax breaks, Vietnamese companies must use materials imported from other TPP members, Giang said, noting this would be a real challenge for Vietnamese businesses when up to 70 percent of materials they are currently using are purchased from foreign countries, mainly China – a non-TPP member. Deputy Minister Tran Tuan Anh said the TPP would be an impulse for Viet Nam's economy to gear towards comprehensive renovation, a higher competitive edge and a better business environment.

Anticipating opportunities afforded by the TPP, lots of US businesses have suggested expanding footwear orders with Viet Nam, while many others have invested in weaving and dyeing projects in the country.

The trend sparks the hope that the TPP will continue creating a momentum for the two countries' relationship, he said. Economists also stressed the need to provide more information about the two countries' markets and conduct trade promotion activities such as exhibitions, workshops and market surveys.

The US now has more than 720 valid projects in Viet Nam. In the first quarter of 2015, US investors poured nearly \$68 million into eight new projects in the country. (vietnamnews.vn)

Vietnam butcher shop fined for selling rotten buffalo meat as beef

Vietnam (13/2/2016) - Authorities in Binh Thuan Province said Friday they had fined the owner of a butcher shop for selling fake beef made from buffalo meat imported from India, Tuoi Tre reported. Tran Thi Thu Huong of Ham Thuan Nam District ordered to pay VND50 million (US\$2,240) for the violation.

On February 3, local police seized 300 kilograms of buffalo meat and bones that had gone rotten from a bus.

The meat was being transported to some slaughter

houses in the district. No papers of origin related to the meat were produced. Police found out Huong was the owner of the shop that sold the meat to the slaughter houses.

Huong said the meat would be soaked in cow blood to look like beef before being mixed into a batch of real beef and sold to the market. Local police said Indian buffalo meat cost around VN100,000 (\$4.5) per kilo and could be sold for around VND300,000 after being "processed" into beef. (thanhniennews.com)

VIETNAM Business In Brief

Experts: Vietnam has advantages in cow farming

Despite challenges, Vietnam's cow farming sector has growth potential thanks to the country's huge demand and favorable climate, experts said at a seminar on cow farming Ha Tinh Province last week. John Marron, director for the ASEAN region at Purcell, which specializes in cattle import-export and technology consulting, told the seminar that the domestic cow farming sector has certain advantages over foreign rivals as Vietnamese are unfamiliar with frozen meat.

Marron said more than 70% of beef is supplied by traditional wet markets, which does not have freezers to store meat.

Therefore, the consumer's habit of buying fresh meat will unlikely change from now until 2018 or later. This means locally produced beef has a competitive edge over imported products. He noted that favorable weather conditions and ample water resources are ideal to grow grass and other plants to make cow feed.

Tong Xuan Chinh, deputy head of the Department of Livestock Production under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, said at the seminar that Vietnam has great potential for cow farming development.

Beef, buffalo meat and goat meat account for around 9% of Vietnam's total meat consumption while the world's average is 23%. The country's per capita milk consumption is 14.5 liters a year, lower than in regional countries such as Thailand with 23 liters and China with 25 liters per person per year.

When incomes rise, Vietnamese will consume more milk and meat. Local manufacturers currently can meet 30% of demand for milk and 50-60% of demand for meat. The agriculture ministry has plans to transform low-yield paddy fields into land for other crops like grass and corn. In addition, some inefficient agricultural and forestry farms could be converted into cow farms.

Experts at the seminar pointed out a number of challenges for the nation's cow farming sector. Tran Phuong, deputy general director of the Bank of Investment and Development of Vietnam (BIDV), said given Vietnam's participation in free trade agreements (FTA), import tariff reductions and exemptions will be offered to almost all foreign agricultural products in the next three to five years.

Vietnam scores big trade surplus with Australia

Vietnam scored a trade surplus of 1.93 billion USD with Australia in 2014, according to figures from the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Vietnam's exports to Australia last year reached 3.99 billion USD, up 13.7 percent against 2013 while its imports from the world's 12th largest economy were worth 2.06 billion USD.

While crude oil is Vietnam's key export commodity to Australia with a share of 46 percent of the total value, agro-products and seafood posted the strongest growth.

Products in the manufacturing and processing sectors such as steel, electric cables, transport vehicles and spare parts, garments, bags, umbrellas and hats saw strong increases but computers, electronic products and components, phones and components showed signs of decline.

To maintain export growth to Australia, a market with a lot of room for Vietnamese products, besides creating favourable and stable legal conditions, the ministry also ask export enterprises to make meticulous preparations to meet the market's strict requirements.

Vinamilk's profit rises 28 percent

The Vietnam Dairy Products Joint Stock Company (Vinamilk) posted an after-tax profit of nearly 7.8 trillion VND (350 million USD) last year, an increase of 28 percent year-on-year. The company's total revenue in 2015 reached 40.2 trillion VND (1.8 billion USD), up 14 percent against 2014.

Vinamilk reported revenue of 11.1 trillion VND (500 million USD) in the fourth quarter of 2015, an increase of 19 percent year-on-year. The company earned 1.9 trillion VND (85 million USD) in after-tax profit, up 10 percent compared with the same period last year.

Although a majority portion of Vinamilk's revenue comes from the domestic market (more than 80 percent), the revenue earned from overseas markets has witnessed strong growth, increasing 39 percent compared with 2014.

The company's expenditure in 2015 rose by 70 percent to touch 6.2 trillion VND (280 million USD), of which advertising expenditures comprised 1.8 trillion VND (80 million USD), up 82 percent.

Forbes praises VN's 'silent' economic success

Forbes has published an article titled 'Viet Nam: The Quiet Economic Success Story Of Asia', praising positive changes of the country's economy. The article said that Viet Nam has risen up after three decades of Doi Moi from one of the poorest nations on earth to become a lower middle income country with a market oriented economy. It was said that the image of a poor and at-war Viet Nam described by international press during the 1960s and 1970s has disappeared and been replaced by office towers, high-end boutiques and bustling streets.

Ho Chi Minh City was described as the most dynamic city in the region with the image of being-built skylines. Near the city's tallest building the Bitexco Financial tower, a symbol of the city, is the almost completed Vietcombank tower which was designed by renowned architecture firm Pelli Clarke Pelli - a soaring art deco-inspired structure.

In 1986, the average annual income was around US\$100 and the figure is now almost US\$2,000 and double that in urban areas, the article said. Despite negative effects of the global economic crisis in 2008, Viet Nam has achieved a 6.3% gross domestic product growth in the first half of 2015, the equivalent of its growth average during the 2000s. After struggling with rising inflation in recent years, the consumer price index rose only 0.6% in August 2015 compared to 4.3% for the same period the year before. Helping to drive this growth in a country of 94 million people is a disproportionately young and well connected population. According to 2014 data, more than 40% of the populations was under 25 years of age.

The country is also incredibly connected, with just about every café, restaurant or bar offering free wifi to patrons, and smartphone ownership exploding. The 2014 The Global Connected Consumer Study by research firm TNS found 40% of the population access the internet on a daily basis, while one in three Vietnamese own a smartphone.

However, the article stated arising matters, including income disparity which leads to increasing the rich-poor gap and remained poverty in ethnic minority groups. It was said that corruption, red tape, business and property ownership regulations still need to be resolved. The World Bank's ease of doing business index ranks Viet Nam 90th out of 189 surveyed economies.

However, despite these challenges there is much to be positive about in the economic outlook for Viet Nam. Considering where the country came from only 30 years ago, it can be regarded as one of the quiet success stories of Asia, the story concluded.

Food safety crucial for Vietnamese produce's reputation abroad

Foreign markets, especially Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement members, will take in Vietnamese fruit and vegetables this year, but the question now is how to supply enough volume while following strict safety standards, an official said. Fruit and vegetables are among the commodities Vietnam has an advantage in when it comes to the TPP. They made inroads into many demanding markets in 2015, including major TPP members like the US, Japan and Australia .

One of the most critical factors in Vietnam's export of fruit and vegetables is to control chemical residues. Director of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's Plant Protection Department Nguyen Xuan Hong said his agency will tighten control over the use of plant protection chemicals this year while encouraging the use of advanced technology to reduce the need for those substances.

Eliminating the use of protective chemicals will help minimise not just production expenses, but also food risks due to pesticide residue, he said, noting that Vietnam aims to cut the spending on plant protection chemical use by half by 2020.

Though the country has sent many kinds of fruit abroad, including dragon fruit, mango, lychee and longan, to many strategic markets like the US , Japan and Australia , the point is to produce large quantities to improve revenue – while meeting importers' food safety and plant quarantine standards, Hong stressed.

He assured Vietnamese exporters that his department will be able to help them treat products in line with importers' health quarantine criteria. All businesses need to do is ensure food safety through good agricultural practices. He suggested multiplying good cultivation role models and increasing coordination between enterprises and farmers as well as among enterprises themselves, noting that if a product from one company does not pass quarantine checks, importing countries will stop buying the same goods from all Vietnamese firms.

The poor performance of one company will affect the entire exporter community, the official emphasised. According to the General Statistics Office, Vietnam grossed 2.2 billion USD selling fruit and vegetables abroad in 2015, a record annual increase of 47 percent.

The country is home to more than 100 fruit and vegetable processing factories, which can produce 300,000 tonnes of products each year. Vietnam exports fruits and vegetables to 40 countries and territories.

MALAYSIA THIS WEEK

Malaysia wants to cooperate in livestock, food sectors

Pakistan (10/2/2016) - Malaysian High Commissioner (MHC) to Pakistan Dr Hasrul Sani Bin Mujtabar met Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, here on Tuesday and discussed matters of mutual interest, bilateral relations and promotion of cooperation in different sectors. They agreed to promote economic and trade relations especially cooperation in livestock, agriculture and Halal food sectors between Malaysia and Pakistan.

The Malaysian High Commissioner said Pakistan is an important trade partner of Malaysia and his government wants to further strengthen trade relations between the two countries as the confidence of foreign investors has enhanced during the tenure of the present government. Hasrul Sani Bin Mujtabar said Malaysian investors also want to benefit from investment opportunities in Pakistan especially Punjab said that Pakistan is an important trade partner of Malaysia.

The CM said there are strong brotherly and trade relations between Pakistan and Malaysia however, there is room for further increase in cooperation in livestock, Halal food, energy, minerals, infrastructure and agriculture sectors. Malaysia has made remarkable progress during the last few

years which is a role model for developing countries. Shahbaz Sharif said that maximum facilities are being provided to foreign investors in Punjab and compared to 2013 Pakistan's economy is developing speedily.

Malaysian investors should invest in Punjab and assured that all out incentives and facilities will be provided. He said there should be maximum exchange of trade delegations between Pakistan and Malaysia for further strengthening relations and the two countries should take immediate measures for this purpose, exchange of trade delegations between Pakistan and Malaysia will help in promotion of economic ties. The Malaysian High Commissioner appreciated the extraordinary abilities of Shahbaz Sharif and said that his capacity to work hard is appreciated not only in Pakistan but also in foreign countries. He said that Punjab government is taking effective measures for the promotion of investment in the province.

(brecorder.com)

Nasi Kandar, favourites no longer affordable

GEORGE TOWN (14/2/2016) - Nasi kandar, a favourite for those wanting a filling meal at reasonable prices, is increasingly out of reach of the average wage-earner.

A lunch plate of RM4.60 last year that included rice, chicken, vegetable and half a piece of salted egg now costs RM5.80.

A glass of teh o' ais, which previously cost RM1, goes between RM1.20 and RM1.50 today.

While the man-on-the-street feels traders are hiking prices for no good reason, those running eateries are complaining that the Goods and Services Tax and rising cost of raw materials had forced them to raise prices.

Civil servant Siti Zubaidah Ahmad Nahar, 33, said she could no longer afford to eat out and packed food from home for lunch at the office.

"The cost of outside food is too high for me to bear. When I was in college, students ate at mamak stalls as we did not have much money, but now you need to have at least RM8

to eat a proper meal at a mamak shop," said the mother of two.

Malay Mail found that staples like fried mihun had increased from RM4 to R4.50 while koay teow soup had increased from RM5 to RM5.50 leading to queries as to whether the hikes were justified.

Chicken rice which used to cost RM3.50 now costs RM4, a 50 sen increase in a matter of months.

Regulars said they had to pay RM5.50 for a late for nasi kandar with rice, a piece of chicken and two vegetables which could have been had for RM4.50 before.

See more at : <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/nasi-kandar-favourites-no-longer-affordable>

CHINA THIS WEEK

Australia enjoys new boom in China beef demand

Australia (9/2/2016) - In the restaurants of Beijing and Shanghai, patrons are asking where's the beef.

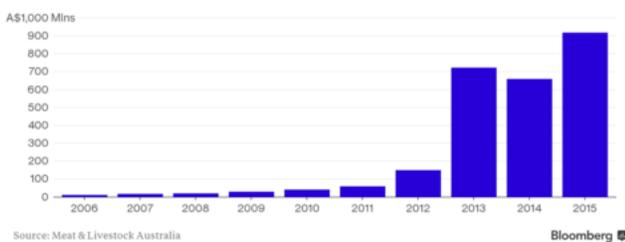
The question is proving a boon for Aussie farmers like Sam Burton-Taylor, who is shipping ever-larger quantities of meat to satisfy the voracious appetite of China's growing middle class.

Australian beef sales to China surged six-fold in three years to a record \$917 million in 2015, data from Meat & Livestock Australia show. The volume of beef shipped to China rose more than four times over the same period while the price received for the exports has jumped 37 per cent in the past 12 months.

While earnings from meat, which totalled \$15 billion last year, aren't about to eclipse those from iron ore, the export boom signals Australia is successfully transitioning away from mining. Just as a sharp increase in demand from China for iron ore pushed up prices for the metal to a peak in 2011, so now is the Asian behemoth's shift toward consumption pushing up prices for beef.

"As countries get richer, their diets change and they prefer higher quality food products, and I think that's a big part of the beef story," said Paul Bloxham, chief Australia economist at HSBC Holdings. "We think it's still got further scope to pick up. There's still a lot more people to enter the middle-class in China and preferences are shifting quite quickly."

Australia's Beef Exports to China Surge



Food safety

Farmers like Burton-Taylor at his Kenny's Creek property are capitalising on Australia's reputation for high-quality produce at a time of dwindling trust among Chinese citizens in the safety of their own food. Scandals ranging from babies poisoned by tainted milk powder to dead pigs found floating in a

river regularly remind Chinese consumers that the produce they eat might not be safe.

"The long-term prospects for exports are strong, but we are naturally mindful that beef producers in Brazil have started to compete more aggressively," said Burton-Taylor, who sells meat from his property outside Canberra to restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai. Competing with Brazil to sell commodities to China is nothing new for Australia - the two nations are key suppliers of iron ore as well.

The Chinese are also changing their diet. For centuries China's favoured meat has been pork, partly because backyard pigs not only supplied meat, but were good at turning waste into manure. Until recently, beef - once known as "millionaire's meat" - was very rare.

California drought

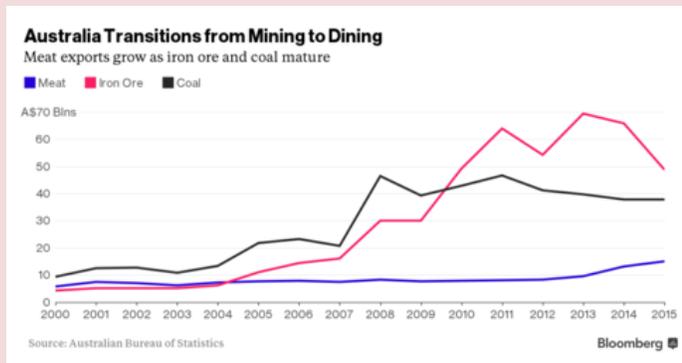
Australian beef sales to the US also soared last year as drought gripped California and depleted livestock there. In the past three years sales to the US, the biggest buyer of beef from Down Under, have almost tripled to \$2.9 billion.

"The US continues to yield a great return for beef producers with the bulk of the product being lean grinding meat, which is often used in hamburgers," said Michael Finucan, general manager international markets at Meat & Livestock Australia. "We are also seeing a substantial pick-up in the sale of high-quality grass fed beef, which is lean and appeals to health conscious consumers."

Burton-Taylor, who was raised on a farm, studied accounting and worked in business before returning to the land, said he visited China more than a dozen times to secure buyers.

Cattle class

The potential for further sales is enormous. China will eat an extra 2.2 million tons of beef a year by 2025, according to Rabobank - enough to make 19 billion quarter-pounders. Some producers in Australia are even loading cattle on Boeing Co 747 cargo planes and flying them to China in order to meet regulations that require imported live animals to be slaughtered close to their point of entry.



While businesses like Burton-Taylor's are a step toward Australia's ambition of becoming a food bowl for Asia,

analysts note that meat isn't a substitute for minerals. Iron ore exports earned the country \$49 billion in 2015 while coal sales were \$38 billion.

"Australia's beef and agricultural exports are unique in terms of the income from the volume and demand as well as the high quality of the produce," said Ben Jarman, an economist at JPMorgan Chase & Co in Sydney. "But while meat exports have been impressive, when taken as part of the overall agriculture category they still only represent about one-third of the value brought in by the likes of iron ore and coal." (*Bloomberg/smh.com.au*)

China's first welfare code for feed lots, slaughterhouses due in June

China (10/2/2016) - China will have its first draft animal husbandry and slaughtering standards code by June, according to the Chinese Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), which is working with 30 domestic livestock breeding and slaughtering enterprises to draft the standards.

The code will "set technical standards" for how animals are housed and fed on farm, but in the slaughterhouse will cover stunning and bleeding of animals, according to a CVMA statement – though it is not yet clear how the standards will be legally binding. The code will cover pigs, poultry, sheep, beef cattle and dairy cattle.

The new standards are driven by a demand for better meat quality and food safety, as much as better treatment of farm animals. The CVMA statement stated how "better animal welfare standards will... also improve animal health and epidemic prevention while also helping to enhance the value of livestock products, thus contributing to food safety and traceability..."

The new code will offer new guidelines to the livestock industry on stocking density, as well as temperature, humidity and ammonia concentration levels in barns and feedlots. There will also be standards for feed and water quality and cleanliness, explained Sun Zhongchao, project director at the CVMA. He predicted the new welfare code would "improve animal health and epidemic prevention".

China's welfare code

Improving food safety – and thus product quality and pricing – is clearly also a goal in China's efforts to draw up a welfare code for the meat sector. "China's standards are in their infancy compared to the EU and the US,

which have sophisticated standards, reflected in the pricing of their livestock and meat products," said Sun.

International organisations have been keen to offer animal welfare training to China's meat industry. The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and Beijing Chaoyang Anhua Animal Product Safety Research Institute (APSRI) have been running a humane slaughter programme in China, which employs four native national-level trainers visiting almost 1,000 slaughterhouses. They have introduced technical standards for slaughtering pigs, based on those of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Slow legislation

Chinese officials have been receptive to outside advice, as the development and modernisation of animal husbandry and meat processing are priorities in the two most recent five-year plans – the country's development blueprints set by central government. As the world's largest livestock producer and consumer, China has more than 400 million cattle, sheep and goats, while herd numbers are rising as consumption of beef and dairy is backed by government as a means of improving rural incomes, while also improving the nation's food security.

China has been slow to adopt the cause of animal welfare, but in recent years there has been increased awareness and a draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Law.. Read more at : <http://www.globalmeatnews.com/Safety-Legislation/China-s-first-welfare-code-for-feed-lots-slaughterhouses-due-in-June>

ASIA PACIFIC THIS WEEK

Zika Virus: A reminder of the importance of emerging disease detection

Bovinevetonline.com (11/2/2016) - By now most people have heard of the exotic-sounding Zika virus. The emergence of this exotic-sounding disease has been garnering attention, even prompting some health officials to advise people to change travel plans.

Overview and symptoms

Zika virus, a tropical mosquito-borne disease, has recently emerged in many South American and Central American countries after having first been characterized in Africa and Asia. Travelers to those parts of the world have brought the disease back with them, including several returning to the United States. The vast majority of people exposed to the virus never know they have the disease. Some develop vague symptoms such as fever, rashes, and body aches. The more troublesome aspect of the disease is its recent association with birth defects in babies. Some of these children have been born with microcephaly, where the baby's head is smaller than normal, along with brain defects.

The possibility of these dramatic outcomes has led officials to advise pregnant women not to travel to certain parts of South America, Central America or the Caribbean, areas of active infection. Luckily for us in the Northern Plains, the mosquito species adept at spreading the virus is not found here. Even in the case of infected travelers returning here, spread beyond them is not likely.

Livestock considerations

Zika virus has no known connection with animals; so far the transmission routes appear to be exclusively human-to-human with the necessary help from the right mosquito species. Yet, its association with birth defects brings to mind some viruses that can affect our livestock.

It was Cache Valley Virus infection that had the

attention of sheep producers several years ago. Infected ewes were giving birth to lambs with severe birth defects – problems in the brain as severe birth defects – problems in the brain as well as fused leg joints and other developmental problems. Cache Valley and Zika virus infections have more than a few similarities. Both are transmitted by insects. They cause mild or no illness in the infected mothers, and both can cause birth defects.

Viruses typically have a hard time navigating a pregnant female to infect the developing baby. The virus has to evade the mother's immune system in high enough numbers to make it through her bloodstream, across the placenta, and infect the fetus. If the fetus's immune system isn't developed enough to clear the virus, the virus can then infect and damage target cells in the fetus.

Some viruses are exquisitely specific about the types of cells they like to infect – for example, the developing brain cells of a human fetus (or a lamb fetus, for that matter). Hence, we get birth defects affecting a very specific part of the brain, or the joints, for example. Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus is another example of a birth-defect causing animal virus, causing a brain defect called cerebellar hypoplasia. This is where just one part of the brain– the part responsible for muscle coordination – doesn't form.

It's important to realize that not every birth defect – in people or animals – results from a viral infection. Genetic mishaps in development are more common causes. Instances of animal birth defects should be investigated by a veterinarian with a good relationship with their diagnostic lab, so that infectious causes can be differentiated from the random causes.

The importance of early detection

Zika virus's emergence also brings up an important aspect of disease detection. Zika virus is not new, having first been investigated by scientists in the 1940's. Tests were developed and largely sat on the shelf while the virus disappeared into obscurity. Now, when people movement and insect survival have changed enough to create the right conditions for the disease to explode, that prior knowledge and tests were already there for scientists to call upon.

Read more at : <http://www.bovinevetonline.com/news/industry/zika-virus-reminder-importance-emerging-disease-detection>

Indigenous cattle company sets sights on becoming major live export player

Australia (8/2/2016) - An Indigenous cattle company in the far north of Western Australia is making inroads towards becoming a major player in the live export industry.

The East Kimberley Cattle Company (EKCC) comprises the stations of Glen Hill, Doon Doon East, Bow River and Violet Valley, near Kununurra.

The plan is the brainchild of Harry Curtain, who formed the company in 2010 to improve the future of the surrounding communities.

Mr Curtain said the 30 local employees were busy rounding up feral cattle, improving herd genetics and starting a major agistment contract.

"We've only mainly got the rubbishy short horn cattle, but the potential is to restock with quality Brahman cattle," he said.

"Our vision is to run 30 to 40,000 head, employ 40 people on each property and supply cattle here to Asia and around Australia."

An Indigenous Land Corporation infrastructure grant has paid for new bores, more than 50 kilometres of fencing and other upgrades to the EKCC properties.

The current focus is the rounding up and sale of 6,000 feral cattle and improving herd genetics via the purchase of several bulls from Boogie Elvira Aboriginal Corporation in Halls Creek.

Mr Curtain said the EKCC had also recently signed a large agistment contract with nearby

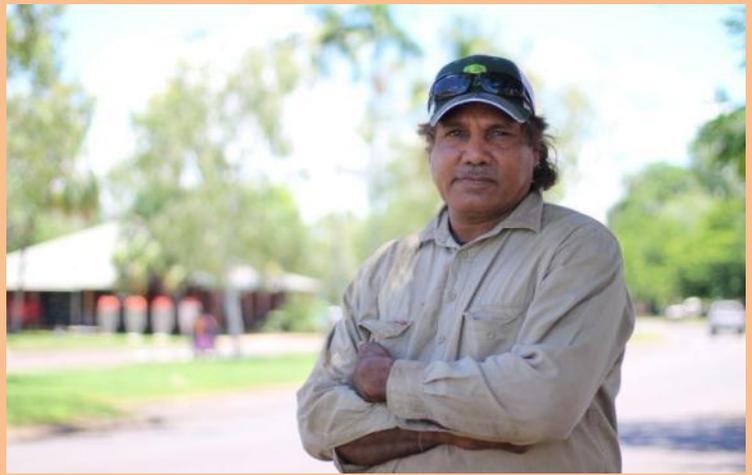


PHOTO: The East Kimberley Cattle is improving the genetics of its herd in order to target the live export trade. (ABC Rural: Matt Brann)

Spring Creek Station.

"While we're waiting for these other ventures, we've made a deal on a yearly basis to give us another income, to keep bringing in cash, to keep us working," he said.

"We've got about 1,030 head on the agistment at the moment and we're looking at another 2,000 coming over."

With the 2016 cattle fast approaching Mr Curtain said the mood around camp was extremely buoyant.

He said the progress being made by the EKCC was beginning to have a positive effect on surrounding communities.

"We can have our own control over the land and management," Mr Curtain said.

"By joining together, we're using our power instead of going solo and going broke [and] it's real good.

"It wasn't all easy when we first started, but I think everyone's got the right idea and is working together." (*abc.net.au*)

Japan lifts ban on Danish beef imports

By Oscar Rousseau, 09-Feb-2016

Japan has ended its 15-year ban on the imports of Danish beef after long-running mad cow disease fears were addressed by European politicians. Trade with Japan in itself is not believed to be worth more than €1m (\$1.1m), but Denmark's Ministry of Environment and Food hopes it can be a stepping stone to other markets in Asia, like Vietnam and South Korea.

The resumption of Danish beef imports to Japan was officially confirmed by the European Commission on Monday 8 February. Japan's decision follows an earlier move by the country to open its market up to beef from France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Poland. Read more at : http://www.globalmeatnews.com/Industry-Markets/Japan-lifts-ban-on-Danish-beef-imports?utm_source=copyright&utm_medium=OnSite&utm_campaign=copyright

Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal signed, but years of negotiations still to come

NZ (4/2/2016) - The Trans-Pacific Partnership, one of the world's biggest multinational trade deals, was signed by 12 member nations on Thursday in New Zealand, but the massive trade pact will still require years of tough negotiations before it becomes a reality.

The TPP, a deal which will cover 40 percent of the world economy, has already taken five years of negotiations to reach Thursday's signing stage.

The signing is "an important step" but the agreement "is still just a piece of paper, or rather over 16,000 pieces of paper until it actually comes into force," said New Zealand Prime Minister John Key at the ceremony in Auckland.

The TPP will now undergo a two-year ratification period in which at least six countries - that account for 85 percent of the combined gross domestic production of the 12 TPP nations - must approve the final text for the deal to be implemented.

The 12 nations include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam.

Given their size, both the United States and Japan would need to ratify the deal, which will set common standards on issues ranging from workers' rights to intellectual property protection in 12 Pacific nations.

Opposition from many U.S. Democrats and some Republicans could mean a vote on the TPP is unlikely before President Barack Obama, a supporter of the TPP, leaves office early in 2017.

U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman has said the current administration is doing everything in its power to move the deal and on Thursday told reporters he was confident the deal would get the necessary support in Congress.

In Japan, the resignation of Economics Minister Akira Amari - Japan's main TPP negotiator - may make it more difficult to sell the deal in Japan.

There is wide spread grassroots opposition to the TPP in many countries. Opponents have criticized the secrecy surrounding TPP talks, raised concerns about reduced access to things like affordable medicines, and a clause which allows foreign investors the right to sue if they feel their profits have been impacted by a law or policy in the host country.

In New Zealand on Thursday more than 1,000 protesters caused traffic disruptions in and around Auckland and police said a large number of police have been deployed.

Chile's Foreign Minister Heraldo Munoz predicted "robust democratic discussion" in his South American nation.

Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb said the agreement would be tabled next week in parliament. Opposition to the deal in Australia has been building, but Robb was confident it would be approved, despite the government not control the Senate.

Canada's new government signed the deal on Thursday, but Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland has said "signing does not equal ratifying."

She emphasised that the government committed itself to a wide-ranging consultation on the TPP during its election campaign and that process was currently underway.

Secretary of the Economy for Mexico, Ildefonso Guajardo, said the TPP would be voted on before the end of 2016, while Malaysia said the deal had already been approved, although some legislative changes were still needed. (*cattlenetwork.com*)

Historic TPP trade agreement signed: What does it mean for red meat exports?

By Jon Condon, 04 February 2016

This morning's signing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership in New Zealand is a big step forward towards advancing opportunities for Australian agriculture and food exporters in a landmark regional trade agreement covering some of the world's largest economies. But what does it mean for our beef and sheepmeat exports?

<http://www.beefcentral.com/trade/historic-tpp-trade-agreement-signed-what-does-it-mean-for-red-meat-exports/>

INDONESIA

Indonesian poultry companies blamed for rising prices

[12 February 2016] Indonesia's Business Competition Watchdog Commission (KPPU) has identified 12 poultry companies in an agreement on broiler PS culling of around 6 million birds. M Syarkawi Rauf, KPPU Chairman, said the commission has sighted a written agreement to reduce chicken supply with a view to control prices. The 12 companies, KPPU said, control 90% of the market share. According to KPPU, the companies' actions has caused the price of chicken at consumer level to reach USD 2.94/kg from an average of USD 2.35. However, this case has led to some confusion as the culling effort was initiated and controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Indonesia's Bulog has abundant corn for Q1

[11 February 2016] Indonesia's state procurement agency Bulog will have abundant corn stock in the first quarter of this year after recently purchasing around 445,000 tonnes of imported corn. This was purchased by feedmillers but detained at six seaports due to the government's corn import ban policy. Djarot Kusumayakti, Bulog President Director, said the agency has signed a contract to buy 260,000 tonnes of corn from Argentina and Brazil for Q1. So in total Bulog will have a stock of around 705,000 tonnes in Q1, he said.

Indonesia's Bulog to buy beef cattle from East Nusa Tenggara

[10 February 2016] Indonesia's state procurement agency Bulog plans to buy beef cattle directly from farmers in East Nusa Tenggara to get stock for beef price stabilisation in the country, especially in Greater Jakarta. The plan emerged as the Ministry of Trade has not approved the import 8000 tonnes of beef from New Zealand. Djarot Kusumayakti, Bulog President Director, said it has sent an inspection team to find partners and study the cattle supply chain in the province.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia's DBE Gurney to venture into food business

[10 February 2016] Malaysia's DBE Gurney Resource Bhd plans to venture into the food sector with a fried chicken franchise under the brands Gurney Fried Chicken and Harumi. The company hopes to open 30 restaurants, 3000 kiosks and 300 mobile trucks in the next three years, Alex Ding, Managing Director, said. "For Gurney Fried Chicken, we will be partnering with a Taiwanese fried chicken company, which currently owns about 600 restaurants [in Taiwan]. They will help us develop our own brand and provide us with the technology. We are finalising the details of the partnership," Mr Ding said, adding that the company plans to open its first fast-food restaurant in Perak by mid-2016.

VIETNAM

Vietnam to enjoy tariff cuts for poultry products from Laos

[11 February 2016] A circular released by Vietnam's Ministry of Finance on import and tax rates on bilateral trade between the country and Laos noted that some goods imported from Laos will enjoy a reduction of 50% in tariffs between February 14 2016 and October 3 2020. The list of goods subject to tax reductions include preserved and cooked poultry and birds' eggs. To be eligible for the tariff cuts the goods must be imported and transported directly from Laos into Vietnam and must carry a certificate of origin issued by Lao authorities.

Vietnamese farmers need financial aid to cope with cold spell

[10 February 2016] Financial support is required for Vietnamese farmers as temperatures drop to below 11 degrees in Hanoi. A report by the Office of the Steering Committee for Disaster Prevention and Rescue showed that the recent low temperatures killed 57,272 livestock, of which poultry accounted for about 77%. Nghe An Province was the hardest-hit with more than 40,000 poultry killed. Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Cao Duc Phat proposed that banks temporarily delay loan payment deadlines for farmers.

THAILAND

CPF plans for sixth feedmill in Turkey

[11 February 2016] Thailand's Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) is planning to build a new feedmill in Turkey this year, Viroj Kampeera, Executive Vice President of CPF told Asian Agribiz. He said that the firm is close to completing the factory blueprint. "Sales of our animal feed skyrocketed in Turkey last year because our sales team had targeted the right market," Mr Viroj said, adding that sales of animal feed in Turkey grew more than 30% in 2015. He said that even with the new feedmill in Turkey, "it may not be enough to meet animal feed demand". CPF currently operates five feedmills in Turkey.

Thai Union completes acquisition of Rügen Fisch

[11 February 2016] Thai Union (TU) announced that it has completed the acquisition of a 51% stake in Rügen Fisch. Based in north-eastern Germany, Rügen Fisch is the country's shelf-stable seafood leader. The transaction has satisfied all regulatory requirements and customary closing conditions, including clearance by the competition authorities in Germany and the European Union. Rügen Fisch's headquarters will remain in Germany. "We achieved another important milestone for Thai Union," said Thiraphong Chansiri, President and CEO of TU. Meanwhile, Andrew Bergmann, CEO of Rügen Fisch said "the integration will enable us to pursue our growth strategy and strengthen our foundation across Germany."

Export gain, price recovery will drive GFPT's earnings in 2016

[10 February 2016] Thailand's GFPT is expected to post a net profit of USD 38.3 million in 2016, up 8% from 2015, driven by export volume gain, domestic chicken price recovery and low raw material prices. Prasit Sujiravorakul, analyst at Bualuang Securities, anticipates that GFPT's export volume (raw and processed chickens) will grow 5-10% this year from an estimated 21,800 tonnes in 2015. Japan is GFPT's key market. Meanwhile, GFPT's export volume in Q4 2015 is forecasted to be at 6,300 tonnes, up 3% from Q4 2014. Mr Prasit said that GFPT's clients who held back orders in the previous few quarters resumed imports in Q4 2015 despite sustained weak global economies and highly volatile foreign exchange rates.

Thailand's TCC Group to purchase Casino Group's stake in Big C

[10 February 2016] Hypermarket operator Big C Supercenter said on Monday that its major shareholder, Géant International BV of Casino Group, has entered into a share sale agreement with Thailand's TCC Group. TCC will acquire Casino's 58.56% stake in Big C Thailand for USD 7.10 a share, totalling USD 3.46 billion. Rumpa Kumhomreun, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Finance and Accounting at Big C Supercenter said that the completion of the sale is expected by end March. Big C operates more than 700 stores in Thailand.

CHINA

China may suffer GP shortage with HPAI related bans

[12 February 2016] China's HPAI-related ban on poultry imports from the US and France may actually increase demand for imported chicken, according to a USDA report on China's chicken market. This is because the ban also covers imported live grandparent (GP) stock, which Chinese producers rely on. As a result, the USDA reduced its projection of Chinese chicken meat production for 2016 from 13.1 million tonnes to 12.7 million tonnes, and also boosted its import projection. The US provided more than 90% of China's GP stock before the HPAI ban went into effect in January last year. French imports filled the gap in 2015, but ended after HPAI hit France's flock in December. Chinese producers are seeking new GP stock from New Zealand and other locations, but they don't have enough supply to satisfy the market.

Strains of HPAI kill six in China

[12 February 2016] Avian influenza has killed at least six people in China since mid-December, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The H5N6 strain of the virus infected at least five people, killing three of them, while the H7N9 strain infected 10 people, killing another three, according to reports on the WHO website. The H5N6 victims were all in Guangdong Province, while H7N9 infected six people in Zhejiang, two in Jiangsu and one each in Guangdong and Jiangxi provinces. Two H7N9 victims died in Zhejiang, as well as the sole case in Guangdong. All of the victims had a history of exposure to live poultry, and all cases were confirmed by laboratory analysis.

Shanghai bans live poultry sales after Chinese New Year

[11 February 2016] Shanghai has banned live poultry sales for three months to prevent bird flu and other diseases caused by live fowl, according to Shanghai Daily. The ban was not put in place until February 8, the first day of the Chinese New Year, so that residents could buy live birds for their holiday celebrations. The downtown districts of Jing'an and Huangpu have already banned the live poultry trade permanently, the temporary ban applies to the rest of the city.

ASIA PACIFIC

Import permits for GM feed ingredients still valid in the Philippines

[12 February 2016] Feed producers and traders with existing permits issued prior to the Supreme Court's ruling banning the importation of genetically modified (GM) crops will still be allowed to bring in GM feed ingredients, Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said. However, the agency will no longer issue new permits until new guidelines and regulations have been released. Dr Fe Cabullo, Chief of the Animal Feeds, Veterinary Drugs & Biologics Control Division, Bureau of Animal Industry told Asian Agribiz that the government is already holding consultations with industry stakeholders as well as other government agencies including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Science and Technology in order to craft the new guidelines that will take into account the needs of various affected sectors.

India's shrimp production likely to decline

[12 February 2016] Higher cost of production and diseases are likely to slow Indian shrimp production in the current year. S Muthukaruppan, President of Society of Aquaculture Professionals (SAP) said that production declined by over 10% last year due to flooding and EHP (Enterocytozoon hepatopenaei, a type of fungal infection) disease outbreak. Recovery is likely to be marginal due to lower returns from farming. Aquaculture shrimp products constitute almost 70% of annual seafood exports from India. "Cost of production has moved up from USD 2.2 to USD 3.31/kg," he said.

Cambodian poultry farm disinfected after birds die

[11 February 2016] Authorities in Kompong Thom province said they disinfected the Stung Seng City farm where some 12,000 broilers died in the last few weeks. They also disinfected a nearby canal where the carcasses were dumped, but said they are still unclear on what caused the deaths. A sample from the carcasses was sent to the Animal Health department in Phnom Penh. The company's poultry Health Manager, Bun Sovannara, said the farm had only 5000 chickens, less than the 12,000 claimed by authorities, and that only about 700 had died a few weeks ago from diarrhoea and respiratory problems.