Australia Should Provide Full Market Access for U.S. Pork

SITUATION

Australia limits the import of U.S. pork to heat-processed pork and frozen boneless pork for further processing because of what it claims is a threat of transmission of Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) virus to the Australian swine herd, restrictions inconsistent with international standards.

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) does not recognize trade in pork as posing a threat of transmitting PRRS. The OIE’s PRRS chapter states that “meat products” are a safe commodity and that “Veterinary Authorities should not require any PRRS-related conditions, regardless of the PRRS status of the exporting country, zone, or compartment.”

The risk of introduction of PRRS into the Australian swine herd from the importation of U.S. pork is negligible. There never has been a case of PRRS being transmitted through the shipment of fresh, chilled or frozen pork from a PRRS-positive nation to a nation free of PRRS.

Similar island nation countries accept U.S. pork without such restrictions. In New Zealand for example, the import of approximately 60,000 tons of fresh/chilled/frozen pork from PRRS countries over a 12-year period failed to produce a single outbreak. It is important to note that the absence of a PRRS outbreak occurred over a period of time when there were either no or weak enforcement of phytosanitary restrictions.

Australia has insisted that additional research is needed. Independent research has been submitted in these topics and it is not accepted. This is a blatant stall tactic that has unfortunately worked for over two decades. Australia must lift these unjustified barriers.

NPPC POSITION

Australia has restrictions on U.S. pork, prohibiting chilled or frozen U.S. pork from being sold at retail. There is no science-based justification and no legal justification for this unfair trade barrier, which should be eliminated.

FAST FACTS

- Pork is the largest U.S. agricultural export to Australia
- Sales have surged from 3,400 metrics tons in 2004, the year before the U.S. - Australia FTA went into effect, to 80,430 metric tons valued at $227 million in 2018
- Iowa State Economist Dermot Hayes says U.S. pork exports to Australia would increase significantly if Australia eliminated unjustified restrictions

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