

# Wyoming Department of Agriculture

2219 Carey Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82002 ■ Phone: 307-777-7321 ■ Fax: 307-777-6593 ■ Website: wyagric.state.wy.us ■ Email: wda1@state.wy.us

*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*



Dave Freudenthal, *Governor*  
John Etchepare, *Director*

August 27, 2008

Docket No. APHIS-2008-0032  
Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD  
APHIS, Station 3A-03.8  
4700 River Road, Unit 118  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

To Whom it May Concern:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposal to allow pork rinds from regions with swine disease into the United States (Proposal).

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it is important that the WDA remain informed of proposed actions and decisions and that we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

Transmission of livestock diseases is a very serious issue in Wyoming and the United States. The four mentioned diseases, foot-and-mouth (FMD), swine vesicular disease (SVD), African swine fever (ASF) and classical swine fever (CSF) could devastate not only swine, but possibly other livestock herds nationwide should an outbreak occur.

We have read and reviewed the Federal Register 9 CFR Part 94. We believe APHIS has done extensive research regarding the possible importation of viruses through cooked or cured pork and pork products. We support the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service-approved facilities to process meats with all shipments accompanied by certification. However, we do have concerns and can not support the current Proposal for the following reasons:

- There is a lack of assurance regarding each country's processing facilities and oversight of foreign inspectors and workers. The USDA lacks the ability to oversee foreign processing plant workers, the quality control training those workers have had and the type of auditing procedures in place to ensure the products will in fact meet the standards proposed to eliminate transmission of livestock diseases.
- Currently Wyoming has to meet "at least equal to" standard with the USDA to maintain its state meat inspection program, but is limited to keeping its processed meat products in-state. A self assessment is submitted on an annual basis and an audit occurs every three years by the USDA. The nine components of audit include: 1) Statutory Authority and Food Safety Regulations, 2) Inspection, 3) Product Sampling, 4) Staffing and Training, 5)

---

#### BOARD MEMBERS

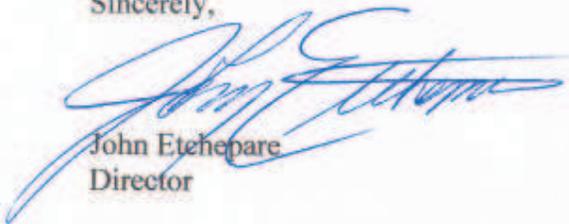
Juan Reyes, *District 1* ■ Jack Conson, *District 2* ■ Jim Mickelson, *District 3* ■ Jim Bennage, *District 4* ■ Joe Thomas, *District 5* ■ David J. Graham, *District 6* ■ Gene Hardy, *District 7*  
Patrick Zimmerer, *Southeast* ■ Dalin Winters, *Northwest* ■ Vacant, *Southwest* ■ Vacant, *Northeast*

Humane handling, 6) Non-Food Safety Consumer Protection, 7) Compliance, 8) Civil Rights, and 9) Financial Accountability.

- State programs such as ours in Wyoming are often held to a higher standard of training, oversight by state regulatory personnel and USDA audits than foreign countries. Yet state inspected products are not allowed in interstate commerce.
- Unless Wyoming meets the "identical" standard by USDA, and a federal inspector inspects these processing plants and products, we can not ship our meat products interstate commerce. We believe it is unlawful for foreign processing plants to ship processed meat products such as pork rinds to the U.S. without being held to USDA "identical" standards and not just the "at least equal to" standard.
- As long as state programs are held to a higher standard than foreign countries we can not support this Proposal.

Should the USDA provide us with the necessary assurances in the future, we will likely reassess our ability to support the proposal to import pork rinds from regions with swine disease into the U.S.. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to reading a final decision.

Sincerely,



John Etehepare  
Director

JE/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office  
WDA Board of Agriculture  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Livestock Board  
APHIS: Cheyenne office  
WDA Consumer Health Services