



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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Takasugi reports progress being made to remove Canadian trade barriers

Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi said today that significant progress is being made to eliminate decades-old trade barriers that have been keeping U.S. agriculture products out of Canada. Takasugi recently returned from tri-lateral talks on major agricultural issues facing the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Takasugi joined officials from eight Canadian provinces, 16 U.S. states and 15 Mexican states late last week in Banff, Alberta as part of the 16th annual meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord. Takasugi co-chairs a committee on U.S.-Canadian trade relations, the Provincial-State Advisory Group, which has been working to eliminate trade barriers that have blocked the export of Idaho potatoes and feeder cattle.

"It is good to be able to report that we're making progress toward removing trade barriers and resolving longstanding issues," Takasugi said. "The meetings we had last week in Canada were some of the most successful so far, and Canada's actions to date are a step in the right direction."

Takasugi said the group's efforts to repeal 1975 restrictions on feeder cattle due to the insect-transmitted viral disease Bluetongue are paying off. Thanks to the group's efforts, the Canadian government has re-evaluated the legitimacy of the threat posed by Bluetongue, and has concluded that imported feeder cattle don't pose a threat. The new assessment allows for feeder cattle to have year-round access to Canadian feedlots. A similar risk assessment is being conducted on anaplasmosis.

"We need to see the final regulatory plan for anaplasmosis before this issue is fully resolved," said Takasugi. "But it is clearly a positive move."

Takasugi also said the Canadians have agreed to make regulatory changes that will ease restrictions on produce shipped in bulk to be imported for processing. Under the Canadian government's current import rules, bulk shipments of 110 pounds or more tend to be blocked by the requirement that Canadian importers receive a "ministerial exemption" before shipment can take place. That makes it particularly difficult for potatoes to cross the border. Proposed changes being developed would allow growers with a contract more than 60 days out to bypass the ministerial exemption process. A final agreement is expected in November.

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