



Voluntary Report - public distribution

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Korea, Republic of

Livestock and Products

Livestock Genetic Import Regulations

2002

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Report Highlights: A provision in the Ministerial Ordinance to the Livestock Industry Act could lead to trade disturbance in livestock genetic imports. Article 21 of the Ministerial Ordinance to the Act requires "Either the survival rate of the semen must be 60% or higher or the rate of deformity must be 15% or lower." This provision has been in place since at least September 7, 1999 but Post and genetic importers are not aware of any cases where importers were penalized due to this provision. However, in 1998 there was a case where the government refused to receive imported semen that did not meet this provision. Revisions in the Livestock Industry Act could change this situation.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: Yes
Unscheduled Report
Seoul [KS1], KS

In July 2002, the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry (MAF) made a proposal to revise the Livestock Industry Act. MAF expects the revision to pass the National Assembly in November 2002 with a 6-month grace period prior to implementation. The proposed revision requires that "semen distributors" be added to the types of business subject to the 'supervision' of the mayor/provincial governor or the head of city, kun, or the head of the agency responsible for the coordination of livestock genetic improvement. (Article 19 of the draft proposal).

MAF insisted that the proposed revision is not intended to hinder trade but was aimed at enhancing its sanitary control over the distribution of livestock and livestock products, so that it could effectively prevent the spreading of livestock epidemical diseases, such as the foot and mouth diseases that broke out in the spring of 2002. MAF also explained that they were trying to tighten the control over swine semen distributors and not dairy semen distributors. However, the proposal sparked concern among dairy semen importers and distributors that it could also spill into their area. It also provided an opportunity to review the current Ministerial Ordinance to the Livestock Industry Act that contains requirements that are very difficult to be met by frozen semen distributors. Ag. Affairs Office, in conjunction with the National Association of Animal Breeders, used this opportunity to raise concern over Article 21 of the Ministerial Ordinance.

Dairy semen importers and distributors were concerned that, by subjecting all semen distributors to "government supervision," the revised Act would allow government officials to reject imported semen. In particular, importers fear that the revised Act would make them legally subject to a provision (Article 21.2) of a Ministerial Ordinance to the old Act in place since at least September 1999.

Article 21 (Restrictions on the use of semen, etc.) The semen, etc., that cannot be supplied, injected, transplanted for the purpose of artificial insemination of livestock under the provisions provided in Article 18-2 of the Livestock Industry Act is as follows.

1. Semen that contains foreign materials such as blood, urine, etc.
2. Either the survival rate of the semen is 60% or under or where the rate of deformity is 15% or higher.
3. The semen, egg or embryo that has been contaminated or suspected for being contaminated with microorganisms causing diseases listed in Article 17-7-1 of the Ministerial Ordinance to the Act. [Embassy comment: The diseases listed in Article 17-7-1 are contagious diseases suspected contagious diseases or hereditary diseases, or diseases that cause problems to the reproduction function.]
4. The semen, egg or embryo that is acknowledged for being too acidic or alkaline that have clear hydrogen ion concentration (pH) level that would hinder the conception.

Contrary to importers' interpretation, MAF stated that the Ministerial ordinance was in effect for all people handling semen etc., regardless of whether 'semen distributors' are subject to the supervision or not. MAF stated that as long as imports meet the minimum requirement for semen (top 10 - 30% level for type, protein content, etc.) without any health problems, they would come in without further restrictions. FAS/Seoul provided a letter with four attachments to MAF explaining the unscientific aspects of Article 21.2 of the Ministerial Ordinance to the Livestock Industry Act. Additionally, FAS and NAAB representatives encouraged MAF to abolish the existing requirement that imported semen must rank in the top 10 -30% of the sire

ranking in the country of origin.

Korea imports more than 300,000 straws of dairy semen, worth US\$1.6 million per year. This trade could be jeopardized if Korea uses the revised Livestock Act as justification for stringently enforcing Article 21.2 of the Ministerial Ordinance. On the other hand, the Dairy Cattle Improvement Center (DCIC) of the National Agricultural Cooperatives Federation (NACF) also sells around 540,000 straws of dairy semen per year collected in Korea from imported bulls. This is in direct competition with imported semen.

Table: Dairy Semen Imports by Korea

Country	Total 2001 (January - December)		Semi 2002 (January - June)	
	Volume (straws)	Value (US\$)	Volume (straws)	Value (US\$)
U.S.A.	171,613	1,186,009	108,033	715,719
Canada	126,175	371,430	78,250	244,300
Japan	16,309	46,762	0	0
Australia	4,000	21,420	0	0
TOTAL	318,097	1,625,621	186,283	960,019

Source: Korea Customs Service, Korean Livestock Genetic Importers (HS: 0511-10-0000)