



July 14, 2010

Dr. John Clifford (by email: john.clifford@aphis.usda.gov)
Deputy Administrator
USDA APHIS
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Clifford:

Thank you for the continued efforts by you and your staff to maintain trade with Mexico by identifying possible interim alternatives to the inspection of imported feeder cattle at CNOG pens in Mexico. For many years, U.S. cattle producers have benefited from a positive cattle and beef trade with Mexico....exporting beef and breeding stock while importing feeder cattle.

However, our organizations have significant concerns that the current plan to utilize inspection pens in the U.S. on an interim basis until APHIS vets can return to Mexico will evolve into permanent use of these pens for initial inspection of Mexican feeder cattle. Such a plan is unacceptable to our members and will ultimately lead to the cessation of imports because of the potential spread of disease, disease vectors and development of other animal health concerns if uninspected cattle are allowed on U.S. soil on a long term basis.

We continue to strongly advocate the following steps to protect animal health and maintain this important trade relationship:

- 1) Evaluate the use of private sector U.S. veterinarians on a contract basis to inspect animals at the CNOG pens in Mexico.
- 2) Continue to pursue Phase 2 as quickly as possible to lease pens in the Pharr, Laredo and Eagle Pass areas for one to two years.
- 3) Work with TAHC, SAGARPA, U.S. producer organizations and the CNOG to identify locations for the construction of permanent CNOG pens in Mexico that will be more immune to disruptions from many factors.
- 4) Work with the Departments of State and Homeland Security to ensure that safety assessments in Mexico are not a "one size fits all" and accurately reflect the level of risk on a port-by-port basis.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet in Texas to continue our discussion about these concerns and seek further clarification on possible solutions. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael E. Egan in black ink.

Texas Cattle
Feeders Association

Handwritten signature of Dave Smith in black ink.

Texas and Southwestern
Cattle Raisers Association

Handwritten signature of Kenneth Dierschke in black ink.

Texas Farm Bureau

cc: Undersecretary Avalos (by email: edward.avalos@osec.usda.gov)