

December 4th, 2007

The Honorable Ken Salazar
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: 202-228-5036

Dear Senator Ken Salazar:

I am writing today to bring to your attention a little-known rule proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that could have disastrous consequences on Colorado's cattlemen. In fact, since learning of this proposed rule, it has become one of our top issues.

Nearly one year ago, the USDA proposed allowing beef trade with certain regions of Argentina. It sounds harmless, but Argentina has documented cases of foot and mouth disease—an illness that travels by air and is impossible to control.

The USDA's plan, which has since caused quite a commotion in cattle country, would set up imaginary borders around parts of Argentina deemed to be safe. Beef and cattle from those areas could come into the U.S.

How can the USDA expect to implement this plan in a way that would not endanger U.S. herds? Foot and mouth disease is an airborne illness that will not stop at imaginary borders.

And Argentina has proven over and over that it does not care about the United States and cannot be trusted to block cattle from unsafe regions. For example, the press reports that Argentina is getting close to Hugo Chavez and the country has fallen under intense international scrutiny for turning its back on \$10 billion in loans made by U.S. companies.

When foot and mouth disease hit Europe, millions of cattle had to be burned to slow infection. Over night, ranchers lost everything their families had built up over generations. The USDA should not invite this kind of hardship into America, especially through an unknown rule that has never been publicly debated.

As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, it is our hope that you will investigate this issue and pressure the USDA to drop this senseless regionalized trade plan.

I have attached a copy of the USDA's plan from the January 5, 2007 Federal Register.

Sincerely,

John Reid
President
Colorado Independent Cattlegrowers Association