



Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND)
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N.D. Ranchers Take Aim at Tainted Argentine Beef

MENOKEN, N.D.—The Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND) passed a resolution at its annual meeting this week to oppose regionalized trade from countries with animal disease problems. The resolution will now go out to the full membership for a vote.

The resolution comes at a time when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is considering opening the U.S. beef market to select areas of Argentina, despite that country's repeated problems with the highly contagious foot and mouth disease.

"Foot and mouth disease almost wiped out Europe's livestock industry a few years ago," said Pat Becker, the president of I-BAND. "It is a silent killer that spreads through the air. It is almost impossible to contain, impossible to stop, and it could reach North Dakota very quickly if we allow infected beef to enter from other countries. Attendees of the meeting were extremely concerned about this issue, and felt I-BAND needed to act immediately."

With little fanfare, the USDA published a proposed rule in January seeking comments on proposed regionalized trade plans with Argentina. An overwhelming number of the comments USDA received were in opposition to this plan, but the agency has yet to issue a final rule on Argentine beef trade.

"With headlines surfacing every day questioning the safety of food imports, it is amazing that the USDA would even consider this cockamamie scheme," Becker said. "It is our hope Congress will look into this issue and put a stop to it immediately."

I-BAND is affiliated with the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA), a national group leading efforts to oppose regionalized beef trade with South American countries. USCA's International Trade Committee co-chairman, Doug Zalesky, was recently in Washington, D.C., to discuss this issue with lawmakers.

"We believe that proper enforcement of regionalized trade would be impossible, opening the door for these regions to become gateways for beef from non-approved areas of Argentina and Brazil," said Zalesky. "Time and time again, Argentina has proven that it cannot be trusted to live up to its promises. Let's not forget that this is a nation that heavily subsidizes its agricultural industries and routinely defaults on international loans."

I-BAND is North Dakota's fastest growing grassroots cattlemen's organization, addressing the market interests of North Dakota cattle producers. I-BAND's primary purpose is to address threats posed to the domestic cattle industry by unfair and illegal trade practices, imports, and all issues affecting the profitability of North Dakota beef producers. Voting members must own cattle. I-BAND adheres to a one-man one vote policy. Membership dues are \$50 annually. To join call 701.422.3396.

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