

China, SA suspend Brazil beef imports over mad cow disease

BRASILIA, BRAZIL: China and South Africa have joined Japan in suspending imports of Brazilian beef meat over an atypical case of mad cow disease, an official source said on Thursday, 13 December 2012.



Image courtesy of Suat Erran /
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"We received official notification from China and South Africa announcing the decision," said an official from the agriculture ministry who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The ministry earlier this week said the case was detected in an animal that died in 2010 in the southern state of Parana and posed "no risk whatsoever to public health or to animal hygiene."

The ministry official said Brasilia, as it did with Japan earlier this week, contacted China and South Africa to set the record straight over the atypical case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

In its statement issued Tuesday, the ministry said: "Brazil does not have cases of BSE" and noted that it launched a "preventive action" to preempt similar measures by key importers.

"We are in touch with countries to reaffirm that the atypical case of the disease carries no risk for exports," the ministry said then.

Authorities also said the World Organization for Animal Health had been notified of the case and in response indicated it was "maintaining Brazil's status as a country with an insignificant risk of BSE, the best existing risk classification."

With nearly 200 million head of cattle, Brazil is a leading beef exporter. From January to October, it exported one million tons of beef, mainly to Russia, the ministry said.

Brazil is a member of the BRICS bloc of emerging powers, which also includes China, India, Russia and South Africa.

Source: *AFP*