

Hungry enough to eat a horse?

For South Africans the chances of horse meat being disguised as beef and slipping through South Africa's import controls are extremely slim claims the agriculture department.



"It is unlikely that South African importers could have unknowingly imported products contaminated with horse meat as imports must be properly certified by the veterinary authorities of the country of origin," the department said in a statement on Wednesday (13 February).

The department had received numerous enquiries about the European horse meat scandal and how it would affect South Africa's meat imports.

Locally imports of recognisable cuts of beef from Germany, Ireland, UK, Spain, Switzerland, and veal from the Netherlands are allowed into the country.

There were also imports of processed meat products, such as salami and ham, from certain countries.

"Authorities require that the raw meat used in those processed meat products be sourced within the country of origin of the consignment, and this must be independently certified by the veterinary authorities of the country of origin," the department said.

Horse meat is imported into South Africa from Brazil and Belgium. Consignments are inspected at the port of entry by South African veterinary authorities.

The department said South Africa itself had a small market for horse meat. There were only three privately-owned abattoirs approved for the slaughter of horses.

"It is neither unsafe nor illegal to consume or sell horse meat in terms of legislation. The meat is inspected and passed by qualified meat inspectors."

Horse meat was also used in various animal products.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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