

STEVE DAINES
MONTANA

320 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-2651

United States Senate

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March 2, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C., 20250

Dear President Biden,

I write to express my concern over continued fresh beef imports from Brazil and urge you and your administration to immediately suspend Brazilian beef imports.


As you are aware, the United States has developed extensive safeguards to protect livestock producers and consumers from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and its devastating effects. Brazil has a longstanding record of delayed reports of atypical BSE cases to the World Animal Organization for Animal Health, including a recent report that was submitted 35 days after the first case was identified. This pattern calls into question Brazil's animal health and food safety systems, and continued importation of Brazilian beef may threaten the health and safety of U.S. cattle.

In 2017, Brazilian fresh beef imports were suspended due to food safety concerns, but USDA unfortunately lifted that suspension in 2020. I believe recent concerns with Brazil's food safety practices justify the immediate suspension of Brazil's fresh beef imports until the USDA can ensure livestock producers that Brazilian beef does not pose a risk to spread BSE or other potentially dangerous livestock diseases.

Additionally, the situation has caused Brazil to suspend its beef exports to China. It appears this is due to a clause in Brazil's trade agreement with China. So once again, the United States finds itself in the situation of being behind China, this time in realm of food safety. If Brazilian beef is not healthy for China, it should not be healthy for the U.S. market either.

Ranchers across Montana make their living by producing the highest quality beef in the world using science-based standards to prioritize the health of both the cattle and the consumer. The U.S. food supply and cattle herds must be protected from undue risk of contamination until Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply's enacts sweeping reforms Brazil's cattle industry and addresses these significant food and safety concerns.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator

CC: Secretary Tom Vilsack, United States Department of Agriculture