

AGRICULTURE — MEAT

1996

## Probe into small-scale meat producers

(3) MEAT Star 11/3/96

The viability of small-scale beef producers is to be investigated by the Red Meat Producers Organisation (RPO).

It has convened a mini-conference to obtain answers to crucial questions relating to the inclusion of emerging producers in the mainstream of the industry.

The questions include whether or not there is a future for the new producer, particularly in terms of the already-dominant character of livestock production systems cur-

rently in existence, the potential for employment in developing rural areas, and the implications of entry into the industry by developing farmers in regard to supply, prices and quality.

The mini-conference, to be held at Roodevallei, near Pretoria on March 26 and 27, is to be opened by Thoko Didiza, the deputy Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Trevor Manuel, will also address delegates. — Pretoria Bureau.

# shock for SA

(3) MEAT

## 'Mad cow' imported meat

British beef industry in crisis as Europe moves to ban all imports: SA's 'lax' rules make us 'ashtray' of the trade

BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Consumers have been warned against beef imported from Britain after the UK government's admission yesterday that meat from cattle infected by what is now widely called "mad cow disease" can be passed on to humans.

South Africa is the largest importer of British beef outside the European Union, with 27 005 tons coming in last year.

Five European countries have now banned imports of British beef which the UK government had for years denied constituted any danger to people, even if the animal was contaminated.

Germany, which has been campaigning for years to get the possible danger posed to humans taken seriously, has now called for a Continent-wide ban on British beef.

There is speculation the official admission could lead to millions of cattle being slaughtered in Britain as a preventive measure, and a resultant collapse of the industry.

Some sources claim the disease led to the death, from brain disease, of 50 Britons last year.

Local councils across Britain have removed beef from the menus of thousands of schools and old people's homes.

In South Africa, lax import regulations could have exposed consumers.

SA Meat Board managing director Pieter Kempen said yesterday meat known to be unfit for

human consumption had been imported last year and escaped inspection. The Board was exerting "a lot of pressure" for stricter regulations and surveillance.

Kempen said there were no regulatory measures that differentiated between imported meat markets, making it possible for uninspected meat to find its way even to the largest supermarkets.

"All imported meat goes into the system, so it could be sold at any outlet whatsoever," he said.

And although meat is imported only from approved abattoirs in other countries, meat is inspected here only if harbour Customs have detected and referred it to the Department of Agriculture's hygiene directorate.

For local meat producers, this new scare has rubbed salt in the wound, with competition from international meat producers already a sore point.

Eastern Transvaal Red Meat Producers' Organisation chairman Egbert Hiemstra said SA was becoming "the ashtray of the world".

"We have a track record of importing other countries' meat that would never be imported by European countries.

"It is not right to me as a producer, or to the consumer, that the standards applied to South African meat are not applied to imported meat," he said.

Meat with high bacteria and hormone levels had been imported by SA in the past, after it was

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rejected by other countries, he added.

But the director of the department's meat hygiene directorate, Paul Bosman, to whom the banning orders by France and Belgium came as a surprise, denied this.

He said international agreements based on mutual trust ensured that such meat was not exported.

High hormone and bacterial contents could be detected under inspection, while the mad cow virus could not, he said.

The French action has removed at a stroke Britain's most valuable market for beef and dealt a devastating blow to the UK government, butchers and farmers as they tried to reassure domestic consumers, the Times News Service reports.

Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg denounced the French move as "a wholly disproportionate response" as Britain made urgent representations to Brussels to have the embargo lifted.

In the past three months France has tightened health controls and cross-border inspections, but resisted demands from farmers for a complete ban on British beef. Denmark has dismissed the other countries' bans as "a very violent reaction".

CT (DR) 22/3/96

# Mad Cow

③ MEAT



# disease

# scare in SA

**WHILE BRITONS REEL AT** their government's revelation that a deadly human brain disease could be connected to mad cow disease, the Meat Board points out that South Africa is the largest importer of British beef outside the European Union and has a poor inspection system.

**L**AX meat import regulations in South Africa may have left local consumers exposed to a fatal disease linked to the British mad cow disease in a scare that threatens to collapse the British meat industry.

South Africa is the largest importer of British meat outside the European Union, having imported 27 005 tons of British beef last year, of which only a small percentage was referred to the Hygiene Directorate, says Meat Board managing director Mr Pieter Kempin.

Local red meat producers have described South Africa as the "ashtray" of the international meat market.

Kempin said yesterday meat known to be unfit for human consumption had been imported by South Africa last year and escaped inspection.

Since last year, the Meat Board had exerted "a lot of pressure" and more regulations were in place, but lax customs procedures were still allowing uninspected meat to enter South Africa.

Already, both France and Belgium have banned the import of British meat as it might be infected with mad cow disease — Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

The gravity of the situation was driven home like a lightning bolt when Britain's Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell said yesterday the government was, if necessary, prepared to destroy every one of the nearly 12 million beef cattle in Britain.

The cost of that last-ditch "option" to snuff out BSE was estimated at £20 billion (about R120bn).

Nobody knew who would pay.

The fear spread like wildfire after Dorrell told parliament on Wednesday night that government experts had established a probable link between BSE and its human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), a link the government had always denied.

At least 10 CJD sufferers, seven of them already dead, had been exposed to BSE in the late 1980s and began showing symptoms over the past two years, the minister said.

Scientists said the virus-like ailment was believed to have an incubation period as long as several decades.

In later stages, the disease eats away at the brain, destroying equilibrium, causing

blindness, deafness, coma and, ultimately, death.

There is no known treatment or cure for CJD.

Exacerbating the crisis, Prime Minister John Major waffled in the House of Commons when asked point-blank by Labour leader Mr Tony Blair if children were at a greater risk than adults of contracting CJD.

It was too soon to say for sure, Major said. A team of scientific experts was due to examine that question by the weekend and he would publish its results immediately after that.

Many British schools have already stopped serving beef.

Kempin said there were no regulatory measures in place in South Africa that differentiated between meat markets, making it possible for uninspected imported meat to find its way even to the largest supermarkets.

"All imported meat goes into the system, so it could be sold at any outlet whatsoever," he said.

And although meat was imported only from approved abattoirs in other countries, it was inspected here only after harbour customs had detected and referred it to the Department of Agriculture's hygiene directorate.

"The problem comes in when the product arrives here," said Kempin.

"Customs does not have the manpower to inspect all the containers. There is no guarantee that all meat containers are referred to Hygiene (the directorate)," he said.

"Hygiene inspects all meat referred to it, but we don't know if any other meat comes in that is not being declared as such. If it is not declared it could by-pass the system."

He said the Meat Board had offered to assist in inspecting imported meat, but were not given permission by Customs and Excise to do so.

For local meat producers, this new scare has rubbed salt in the wound, with competition from international meat producers already a sore point.

The chairman of the Eastern Transvaal Red Meat Producers' Organisation, Mr Egbert Hiemstra, said South Africa was becoming "the ashtray of the world".

"We import other countries' meat that would never be imported by European countries." — Own Correspondent

# SA bans British imports after mad cow scare

South Africa yesterday joined 15 other countries in announcing a temporary ban on British beef imports as a precaution against the fatal mad cow disease, whose human equivalent is threatening to reach epidemic proportions, according to British scientists.

European Union members Austria, Italy, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the

Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden have announced bans on imports of British beef pending scientific advice and expected EU action next week. New Zealand, Singapore and Cyprus also joined in the call for a ban. Germany also banned meat imports from Switzerland, which has the second-highest incidence of the disease.

Veterinary experts from across

Europe met in Brussels yesterday to confront the mounting crisis over mad cow disease, as the EU weighed the economic and political fallout of a total ban on British beef.

South Africa, the largest importer of British meat outside the EU, last year imported more than 27 000 tons of British beef, about 3% of total South African beef consumption.

A spokesman said the Government

had been content to accept the British government's guarantees on the quality of beef imports, but that recent admissions by the British that humans might also be susceptible to the fatal disease had prompted the ban. He said the ban was designed to be temporary, to give the Government an opportunity to examine the safety precautions taken for beef exports in Britain.

The managing director of the South African Meat Board said this week that meat known to be unfit for human consumption had entered South Africa last year after escaping inspection.

Since then the Meat Board had enforced more regulations, but un-inspected meat still made it into the country due to lax customs procedures. - Reuters

③ MEAT

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Star

23/3/96



A British butcher at work among beef carcasses yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: AFP

# 'It's enough to drive you mad'

## One SA meat eater's search for truth

JOHN YELD

Staff Reporter

MEAT eaters, worried by the flurry of press reports about mad cow disease affecting British beef, are being driven crazy with concern.

Now, some are demanding that it should be obligatory for fresh meat products to carry a label of the country of origin.

They say that in this way, South African consumers would be able to decide for themselves whether to be swayed by all the hype and hysteria and avoid British beef at all costs, or to believe John Major's health minister Stephen Dorrell that measures introduced since 1989 to prevent mad cow disease were more than adequate.

But trying to find out what the current regulations are, proved about as difficult as tracing the ever-so-tenuous links between Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and its human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD).

A spokeswoman at the ministry of trade and industry clearly didn't understand the question.

"As yet, there is no legal specification for goods coming in. We don't know what we're dealing with, but something is being done - the ministers of trade and industry, and of finance and the Commissioner of Customs and Excise are in discussions about how to get a handle on this," she offered helpfully.

The regional office of the ministry referred the query to head office in Pretoria.

"We only do exports," was the terse explanation.

After a number of "hold on's", clicks, buzzes and canned music, the switchboard at the Pretoria office suggested contacting the Bureau of Standards. "It's definitely not your responsibility?"

"No!"

The SABS man said they dealt only

with canned fish, frozen fish and canned meat products, and why did we want to know, anyway?

Well, if people think their brain tissue is likely to dissolve after tucking into a Sunday roast, isn't that a matter of some public concern?

He was more forthcoming after that, and suggested trying the regional department of health in Bellville.

The official there was friendly but somewhat apologetic.

"The labelling of fresh meat - that's not our responsibility. It's one of those government things. It's the department of agriculture, not a health requirement."

He suggested contacting the head of this department's veterinary section: meat hygiene. We tried, but unfortunately the director was out, although one of his assistants was also helpful.

"Yes, it has to be labelled, as far as I know. Why don't you try the veterinary health section?"

We did - only to be referred to the directorate's head office in Pretoria - "Try Dr Van Wyk or Dr Bruckner."

But Dr Van Wyk's secretary said he was away until Friday and Dr Bruckner would only be back on April 1. Would we like to try Dr Schoeman?

Dr Schoeman, it turned out, was attending a conference and would only be back in the office today.

"There's nobody else who can help here. Perhaps you should try Dr Bosman at the chief directorate: animal health ..."

Dr Bosman, it seemed, may have been at the same conference as Dr Schoeman and would be away until tomorrow.

"But I can refer you to Dr Van Wyk ..."

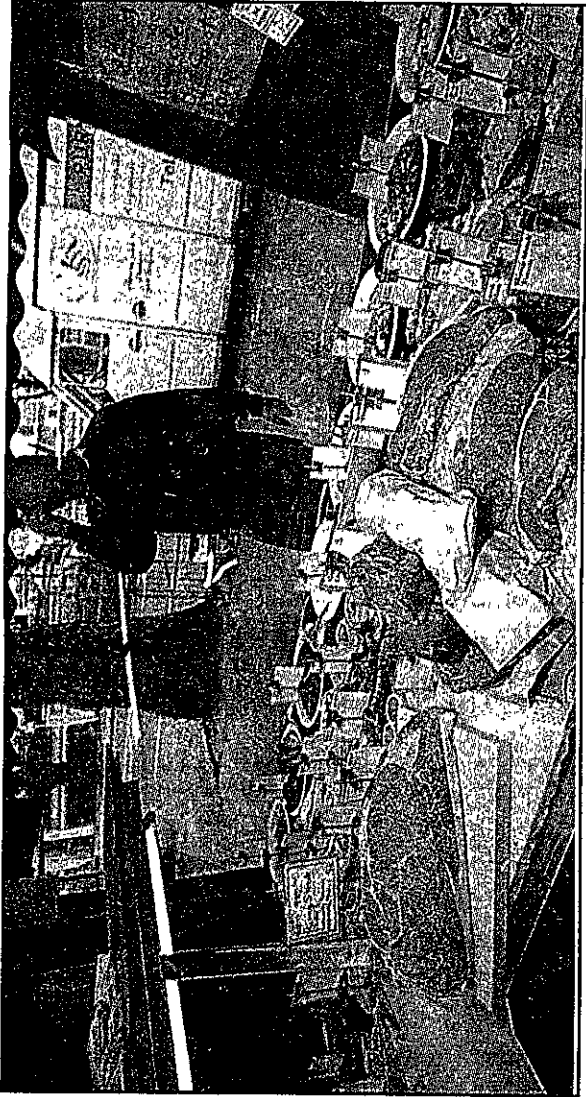
Dr Van Wyk? Hang on ...

It's enough to drive a reporter ... well, if not mad, at least reckless enough to rush out for a British hamburger!

(3) MEAT (SABS)

# MAD COW SCARE:

ARG. 23/3/96  
(3 MEAT)  
~~BEA~~



■ **NO MEAT TODAY:** A prospective customer views a range of beef and other meat supplies in a London butchery. Several countries, including South Africa, have banned the import of British beef following the "mad cow disease" scare.

# UK BEEF BAN

■ Growing concern about the threat of 'mad cow' disease has prompted South African authorities to bar the import of British beef.

**CHRISTINA STUCKY**  
Own Correspondent

AS a precaution against the fatal "mad cow" disease, South Africa has announced a temporary ban on British beef imports.

The country yesterday joined 15 other countries in announcing the ban, which has been prompted by an outbreak of the human equivalent of the disease, which is threatening to reach epidemic proportions, according to British scientists.

European Union (EU) members Austria, Italy, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden have banned imports of British beef pending scientific advice and expected EU action next week.

New Zealand, Singapore and Cyprus also joined in the call for a ban.

Germany also banned meat imports from Switzerland, which has the second highest incidence of the disease.

Veterinary experts from across Europe met in Brussels yesterday to confront the mounting crisis.

South Africa, the largest importer of British meat outside the EU, last year imported more than 27 000 tons of British beef, approximately three percent of total beef consumption.

A government spokesman said recent admissions by the British that humans might also be susceptible to the disease had prompted the ban.

He said the ban was temporary, to give the government an opportunity to examine the safety precautions taken for beef exports in Britain.

The managing director of the South African Meat Board said on Thursday that meat known to be unfit for human consumption had entered South Africa last year, escaping inspection.

Since then the Meat Board had enforced more regulations but uninspected meat still made it into the country due to lax customs procedures.

As the crisis grew in Britain, many steak and rib restaurants in London were nearly empty after the government admitted there was a likely link between bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or "mad cow" disease) in British cattle and its fatal human equivalent Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD).

British scientists warned that a new strain of CJD, which usually strikes middle-aged and elderly people, could turn into an epidemic.

Veterinary officials in Brussels said there were several possible scenarios - accepting a British move to debone all beef from animals aged over two-and-a-half; tightening protective measures; or opting for a blanket ban on British beef.

"No one can say at this stage what measures may be taken in the future," said Gerrard Kiely, the EU commission's agriculture spokesman.

Mr Kiely said it was premature to speculate about the cost of EU market support measures if producers sent unwanted beef into public stores or the cost of compensation to farmers for slaughtering herds.

"We are at the peak of public reaction. We are not going to make any rash decisions," Mr Kiely said.

The EU's beef mountain stood at 1.2 million tons in 1992, but has now shrunk to virtually zero.

The EU is the world's second beef producer, after the United States, accounting for nearly 15 percent of world output. It produces about eight million tons of beef a year from a herd of around 32 million cattle.

The EU exports about 1.2 million tons of beef and veal a year, mostly to Eastern Europe, compared with imports of around 500 000 tons.

# Confusion reigns over 'mad cow' beef

BD 25/3/96

~~(7)~~ (3) MEAT

Louise Cook

PRETORIA — Government's decision to slap a ban on British beef imports is in spite of persistent claims over the past two months that SA had nothing to fear from "mad cow disease".

Officials caved in on Friday after the British government admitted there was a possible link between the cow disease and the human killer, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, but there remained considerable confusion among officials over the issue.

Animal health directorate chief director Paul Bosman stuck to claims that all beef from Britain had been

deboned and was therefore free of contamination. But the agriculture ministry was less sanguine, with senior administrative secretary Deon Joubert saying he would give British beef "a miss for a while". Health regulations seemed to have worked up to now, but he confirmed that agriculture department veterinarians would be flying to Britain this week to investigate.

Health department director Neil Cameron said there was no major threat to humans from the disease, which was very rare in SA. It caused the brain to liquify, leading to blindness, deafness, coma and then death.

The Consumer Council said it was

awaiting further information from government before deciding what to do.

Red meat producers' organisation chairman Jannie Fourie suggested that SA import beef from neighbouring countries. Local production met only 70% of domestic needs and about 27 000 tons of British beef had been imported last year.

Shoprite Checkers ordered its Natal branches to pull British beef from its shelves on Friday. The retail group, which said it used a "small quantity of British beef", is the only supermarket chain to use imported meat.

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Tons of imports put on hold

# British beef sold 'in most big SA stores'

Louise Cook  
and Jacqueline Zaina

BD 26/3/96

PRETORIA — Red meat suppliers said yesterday they had supplied imported British beef to most major retailers, despite previous claims that the meat — now a pariah because of "mad cow disease" — was a rarity in SA shops.

Renown Fresh Meat and Kynoch Fresh Meat both said they had supplied major supermarket groups, meat wholesalers and individual butcheries with UK beef. The meat was used in sausage, mince, polony, bullybeef, viennas and canned meat products.

Up until now, only Shoprite Checkers has said it sold UK beef, and moved at the weekend to withdraw such products from its shelves. Pick 'n Pay and Woolworths denied yesterday that they sold UK beef.

However, Kynoch Fresh Meat MD Eric Aspeling said Woolworths, Shoprite Checkers and Pick 'n Pay were among his clients for meat imports, including UK beef. It was difficult for clients to tell precisely where meat in such products came from.

The company had been planning to import 100 tons of UK beef, but this would be returned following government's decision on Friday to place a temporary ban on UK beef imports.

Renown Fresh Meats MD Theo Meyer said Renown had supplied most

major supermarkets and was holding back 40 tons of beef from Ireland, awaiting a directive from government. Kolosus Holdings subsidiary Atlas Meats had also been supplying hyperstore butcheries with Irish beef.

Government imposed the ban on UK beef imports after the UK government finally admitted a possible link between the disease and the human killer Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

The UK cabinet held an emergency meeting yesterday as pressure grew to slaughter around one-third of its cattle, at an estimated cost of £3bn.

European Union veterinary experts were also meeting after most EU governments in Brussels voted last night to ban UK beef.

The SA agriculture department, which is to send officials to the UK on Sunday, sought again yesterday to play down the threat of the disease.

The department said the ban was largely a public relations exercise, following "hysterical" media coverage and public response.

Sapa reports department chief director Paul Bosman said there was no scientific foundation for the move.

Officials said UK beef imported before the suspension was freely available on SA shelves, mainly as minced meat and hamburger patties (McDon-

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## Mad cow

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alds SA said yesterday it used only African beef).

The officials said they were satisfied this meat held no real danger to consumers, thanks to the standing precautionary requirements for such imports.

Pick 'n Pay said it contacted all its suppliers to check that they did not source UK beef, and the only imported meat it was selling came from New Zealand, Australia, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Shoprite Checkers said it had not had any UK stock when the news broke. But it had cancelled all orders for imports from the UK.

Woolworths said it had never imported meat from the UK, given the

disease threat, and had checked with the authorities in New Zealand, Australia and Holland for what little meat it did import.

Consumer Council director Ina Wilken warned consumers not to buy beef if there was any doubt about its origin.

Agriculture and land standing committee chairman Janet Love said consumer fears about contaminated beef were valid and that monitoring British beef imports might not be cost-effective in future.

She told red meat producers in Pretoria last night this would justify more imports from SA's neighbours.

Reuter reports from Paris that a herd of 151 cattle was slaughtered yesterday after a rare case of "mad cow" disease occurred in France.

A second herd would be slaughtered soon, it reported.

BD 26/3/96

# Fresh meat safer than processed, buyers advised

~~THE~~ (3) MEAT Nov 26/3/96

BY NIKKI WHITFIELD

South Africans have no way of knowing whether processed meat – for which the bulk of imported British beef is used – is contaminated with mad cow disease, the infection which has sent shock waves across the world.

While most major South African supermarkets have given the assurance that British beef will

not be found in freezers and the Department of Agriculture has slapped a ban on its import, its presence in processed meats – like boerewors, salami, polony, cans of meat and Vienna sausages – is far more difficult to detect.

The department has given assurances that imported meat is tested, but mad cow disease cannot be detected in normal checks. "What this boils down to is

that there is no absolute guarantee that there is no mad cow disease in South Africa," said Fritz de Jager, manager of the Red Meat Producers' Organisation. "The onus is on butcheries to remove all stocks of British beef and keep it off the shelves until the scare is over.

"As far as processed meat is concerned, it is almost impossible to trace what proportion of British beef it contains. Meat imports must be stated as such when sold in butcheries and supermarkets, but once it is processed there is no law which insists it be sourced."

Minute quantities of imported beef is sold as a fresh product. A whopping 95% of it goes into processed meat.

"It would be better for the public to stick to fresh meat until the processed foods have gone through the system," he said.

The human form of mad cow disease, the fatal Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), can lie dormant in the body for years.

Ten people have succumbed to the disease in the past year, sparking a wave of anger and fear which is devastating the British

beef industry.

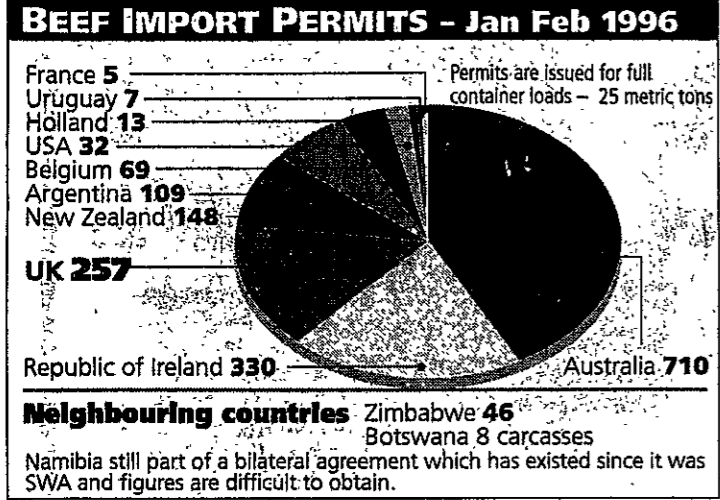
The little-known illness looks similar to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly known as mad cow disease, and first manifests itself in sufferers in the form of anxiety and depression.

Victims then become unsteady on their feet and disoriented. As time goes by, their sense of reasoning goes and they are unable to eat or communicate. Dementia sets in and they become bed-bound and lapse into a coma. In the final stages of the disease, the brain turns to liquid and the victim dies a wretched death.

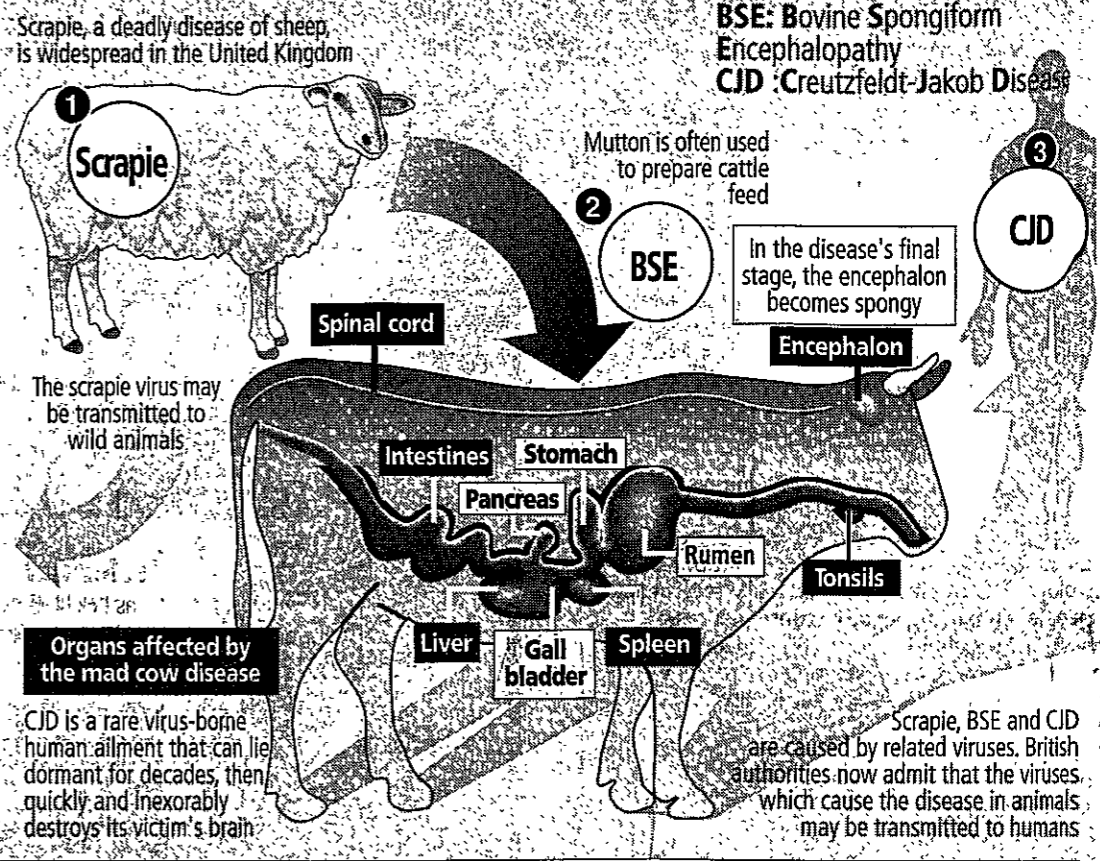
However, there have been no reported cases of CJD or mad cow disease in this country.

Of the total amount of beef consumed here last year, 11,8% came from imports.

Beef on its way to South Africa now will be bonded in warehouses in accordance with the Department of Agriculture's ban on the commodity. A high-level technical team has been dispatched to the UK to confer with their British counterparts in a bid to clear up the position.



## FROM BOVINE 'MADNESS' TO HUMAN AILMENT



# Warning over buying processed meat products

(3) MEAT

Star 27/3/96

Local company urges consumers to stop buying until 'mad cow' crisis is over

By NIKKI WHITFIELD AND PRISCILLA SINGH

A major meat company has warned consumers to hold off buying processed meat products - which includes polonies, sausages and hamburger patties - until the mad cow disease crisis is resolved.

A national marketing manager for the company said yesterday this is a grey period until authorities, both local and overseas, reach consensus on the disease.

The spokesman said a South African delegation was already overseas, "but our hands are tied until they come back".

"There is no way of telling whether processed meat products are infected or not because our technologists do not know how to do the tests," the spokesman said.

He said all containers coming to South Africa with British beef had been ordered to turn back.

The spokesman could not say when the company's last consignment of British beef arrived in South Africa.

Other major processed meat companies could not be reached for comment.

The South African meat industry, fearing a drop in demand for meat as the scare over mad cow disease continues its frenzied run, has given locally produced beef a firm stamp of approval.

Local producers and suppliers are worried that a ripple effect of the fear that has gripped beef-eaters and caused a major political rumpus in Europe will cause people to steer away from meat - no matter where it comes from.

But, according to the Meat Board and abattoir chiefs, consumers need not sacrifice silver-

side or ban brisket if they follow a few simple guidelines:

■ Make sure you know the origin of the cut of meat you want to buy. If you can't see a roller stamp mark on the skin of the meat itself, insist on knowing where it's from by asking - even hounding - your butcher to show you the roller mark in the chillers.

■ Buy South African beef before cuts from any other country.

■ Be cautious about eating processed meats. Most imported meat goes into processed products - such as boerewors, polony, salami, Vienna sausages and hamburger patties. The Red Meat Producers' Organisation has advised people to stick to fresh meat until processed meats have had a chance to go through the system.

The Meat Board has also given assurances that it follows strict requirements to ensure imported meat is fit for human consumption. They are:

■ That the meat must originate from areas that have been devoid of mad cow disease for the past five years.

■ The country of origin of the carcass must be clearly marked on the skin as well as at the final point of sale.

■ That meat is subject to special processing procedures. Meat must be devoid of glands, nerves and bones.

Abakor spokesman Dr Johan Boshoff said the industry was worried about negative spinoffs "as far as the product as a whole is concerned. It will be a pity if sales drop off as there is nothing wrong with South African beef at all."

UK giving way on mad cow issue Page 4

# Kolosus in move to allay fears about beef

BO 28/3/96

~~18 (110)~~

(3) MEAT

~~(110)~~

FEARS about "mad cow" disease struck the JSE this week as shares in beef producer Kolosus Holdings slumped. The stock was hit by fears that SA consumers would be scared away from its meat products by the furor.

Management at Kolosus, a producer of livestock, processed foods and leather, moved to allay consumer and shareholder concerns yesterday following a 7% dive in its share price since Friday. The share was untraded yesterday, stuck at an all-time low of 500c.

The beef scare follows the UK government's admission last week that scientists had discovered a possible link between "mad cow disease", a lethal brain condition, and its fatal human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

"Although we are firmly entrenched in the meat industry ... Kolosus is not a meat-only company," Kolosus said. It said 60% of attributable income came from its leather business. Although meat-related activities contributed the

remaining 40% of income, only 20% was beef-related.

"About 20% of our meat business is food processing and distribution. Our processing is mainly pork-based, not beef, and distribution is a service industry," Kolosus financial director Ronnie van Rensburg said.

He said Kolosus did import beef from the UK for processed products, but group policy had always been to import from herds free of BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), substantiated by veterinary certificates. "All fresh and frozen beef we sell to retailers comes from our local feedlots."

Last week an agriculture ministry spokesman said SA imported 3% of its beef from Britain. SA's Federation of Meat Traders said this equalled 27 000 tons in 1995.

Although in the past a significant quantity of Kolosus's imports stemmed from the UK, it was already sourcing supplies of beef from countries such as those in South America. — Reuter.

# SA meat safe – board

③ MEAT 1/4/96 Star

Amid the mad cow disease scare, Meat Board says local meat is a good bet because of the rigorous application of hygiene standards

By **BOBBY BROWN**

South African meat-eaters need not fear mad cow disease – as long as they stick to beef stamped with the Meat Board's mark of approval, the board said at the weekend.

The board said South African meat had always been safe because of legislation such as the Abattoir Hygiene Act, and regular inspections of meat imports and slaughtering facilities.

Meat Board spokesman Dr Gerhard Bruwer said although meat from the UK had been banned in SA for the next year, a team would visit the UK later this month to examine the extent and seriousness of the scare.

"Consumers should learn to identify safe meat

by the stamps on them. Once they have been passed by the Meat Board, they are stamped with a 'Passed/Goedgekeur' mark on four different places on a carcass," he said.

The purple stamp applied to local products, and imports were stamped with various other colour stamps. The stamps, one a circle and the other a circle inside a square, were visible mainly on bulk meat purchases, but may be absent with smaller, pre-packed meat.

Bruwer said the Meat Board also promoted a red-meat classification system for prepacked beef, lamb and mutton. The purple, brown and red roller marks indicated different degrees of tenderness of meat, but also signified the meat was South African.

Pork was not classified,

since it was naturally tender and the amount of fat was judged visually.

He admitted the board did not have the staff to inspect meat to ensure the stamp was not misused.

Dr Hendrik van Rensburg of the SA Bureau of Standards said the bureau was responsible for maintaining compulsory standards in canned marine foods, canned meats and frozen marine foods. The SABS would either release an imported product if it complied with SABS standards, return it to its owners if it did not, or label it as "sub-standard" if the offence was minor.

He added that nobody had ever died or become ill from eating canned foods in SA, except in cases where the can had been opened and food eaten some time after opening it.

# SA's red meat producers decide to stand together

(3)MEAT Star 2/4/96

**By NORMAN CHANDLER**  
Pretoria Bureau

Red meat producers have agreed at a conference that only one organisation should represent the industry.

The conference also agreed in principle to support proposed marketing legislation which would enable role players in the industry to manage the red meat industry themselves and to finance the

operation through a compulsory levy to be used for research, training, development of producers and markets, and for administration.

The conference, held near Pretoria, decided to

appoint a committee to investigate methods of integrating small-scale producers into the existing structures of the Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO). Representatives of producers from all nine

provinces will serve on the committee.

Access to finance, markets, training and tariff policy were among the subjects discussed by delegates representing 25 producers' organisations.

# Meat trade lobbies for ban to end

(3) MEAT (2/17)

DALE GRANGER

CT 11/4/96

IT WAS more dangerous to drive to work than eat British beef, South African importers and English exporters said yesterday in lobbying for the ban on their product to be lifted.

While the Department of Agriculture debates with leading vets over whether imported British beef was free of mad cow disease, R10-million worth of imported British beef has been frozen in cold storage and a decision on the ban is only expected tomorrow.

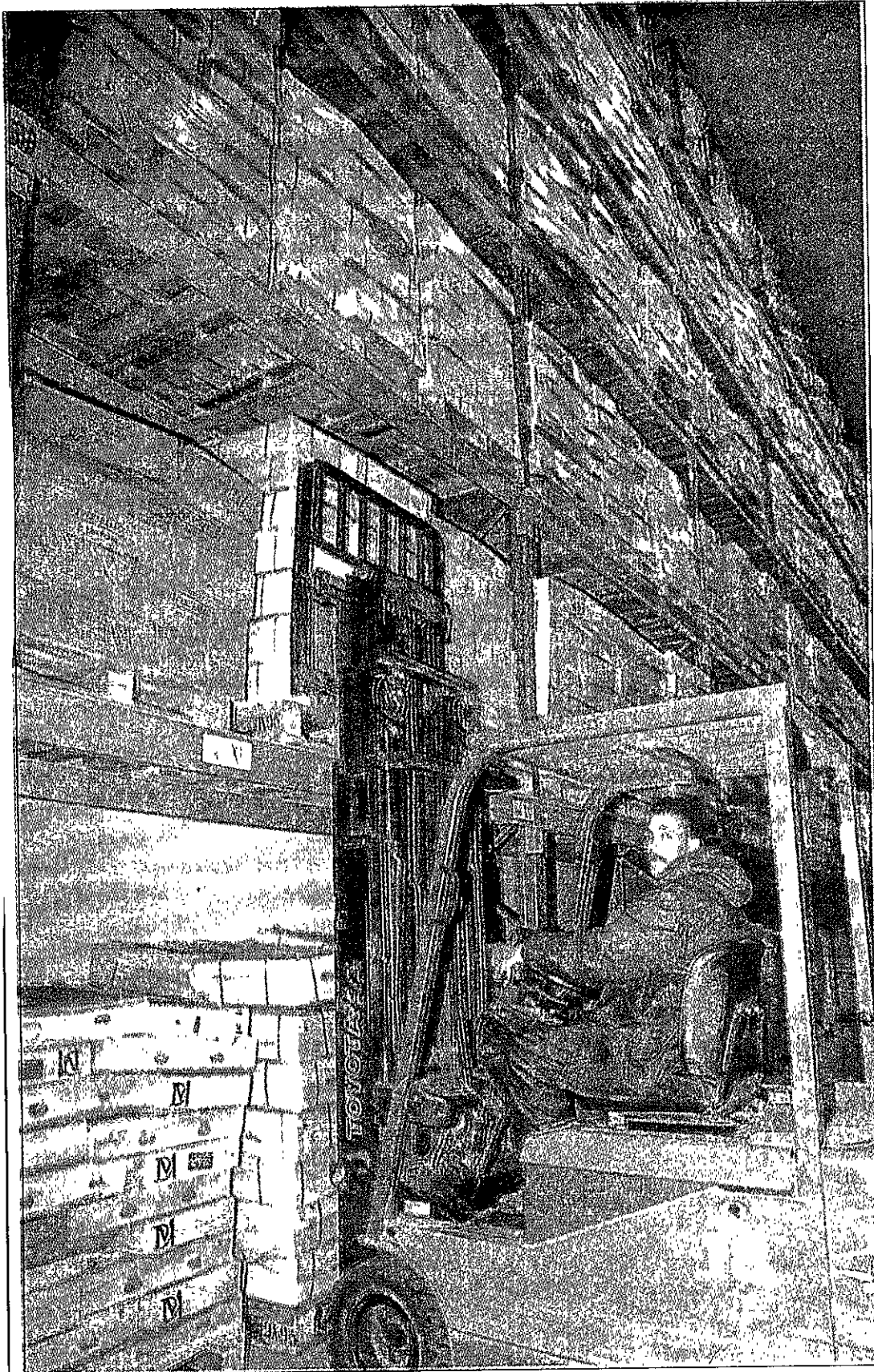
"There is nothing wrong with the product," said one Cape Town importer, who said profit margins were slight on a business dealing in volumes and, with each passing day of the ban eating into profits, they would only be able to hold out for a few more weeks.

He said if the meat was shipped back to the UK or incinerated, it would be "very difficult to say who is going to be stuck with the bill."

Mr Patrick Gaertner, managing director of Gaertner Trading, which has 200 tons of imported beef worth about R1,2m hanging in limbo at a cost of about R20 000 a week, said the three-week ban had "already eaten a sizeable margin of profits".

He found it ironic that many countries that imported beef to South Africa did not test their cattle for BSE, while in South Africa the Meat Board was quick to "get on the bandwagon and ban imported beef when meat slaughtered widespread in back streets was much more serious".

Meat exporter Mr Bob Winter, speaking from Essex in England, described the whole issue as "people listening to gossip rather than facts. I just wish they would make up their own minds and listen to scientific evidence instead as the safety of British beef has been authenticated".



**FEELING THE FREEZE:** Mr Ivan Ryneveld, a worker at a cold storage company in the harbour, ponders the fate of 100 tons of imported British beef which has been frozen in -28° for three weeks while the Department of Agriculture and vets debate the future of the banned meat.

PICTURE: CLIVE SMITH

# Destroy imported UK beef, say experts

BY TARYN LAMBERT

③ MEAT

Star 22/4/96

Some several thousand tons of beef kept in quarantine after being imported to South Africa from the UK must be destroyed or returned to England, according to meat experts.

A delegation, including Meat Board general manager Dr Pieter Kempen and representatives from the departments of agriculture and health, was sent to the UK to investigate the dangers of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or "mad cow" disease earlier this month. They found British beef posed a possible threat to SA consumers.

It was difficult to calculate the present amount of British beef in SA as there were many different importers, said Johan Viljoen of the Meat Board yesterday.

He said the imported beef amounted to several thousand

tons and a shipment of 2 000 tons which was blocked from entering the country two weeks ago would also have to be destroyed.

"In light of the British prohibition order on the sale of beef and beef products for human consumption, it would be irresponsible to the SA consumer if all beef imported from the UK is not destroyed, forthwith," Kempen said.

Referring to future imports, the statement said the temporary ban on the import of beef and beef products from the UK should remain in place until the UK has been reclassified a BSE-free country. The ban should be extended to include other countries that could not provide a disease free record for at least the past five years, it said.

The precautionary measures were in line with similar measures implemented by the US and some Arab countries.

The recommendations made by the Meat Board were not only based on the potential threat to consumers' health but are "of further importance because SA cannot afford a threat of eradication of its beef herd as a consequence of BSE infection".

It is still not clear how BSE is spread. Veterinary surgeons in the UK suspect the disease is contracted through the intake of feed containing animal proteins. The disease would only become detectable when it became clinically active in an animal and could remain dormant for some time.

South African microbiologists, contacted by The Star when the "mad cow" disease furore broke earlier this year, said humans could only contract the disease by being in contact with infected cattle's brain tissue.

The Meat Board has adopted a "better safe than sorry" view.



ET 29/4/96

# Beef importers face losses

**STAFF WRITER**

EIGHTY shipping containers of British beef in South Africa are to be destroyed — but not without a fight.

The beef is to be destroyed as a precaution following reports that the disease, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, better known as mad cow disease, can be transmitted to humans.

Mr Savo Sakota of Durban Deep Wholesale Meat in Roodepoort who owns 20 of the containers, about 400 000kg of meat worth over R3 million, said he would go to court before allowing anyone to bury his perfectly healthy meat.

"Meat in this consignment

comes only from cattle in herds that have been free of mad cow disease for the past five years," he said. "We have that certified by the British health authorities."

This was a requirement, among others, imposed by South Africa when the veterinary services branch of the Department of Agriculture issued him a permit to import the meat. He had complied with every one of the department's requirements.

"Someone has decided it is no good. But it is up to them to buy it from me, and then destroy it," he said. "I'm not insured against having meat condemned in this way."

In Cape Town importer Mr Patrick Gaertner, who owns

over R1m of the beef in storage in the harbour, said if the meat posed a health hazard, then it had to be destroyed.

However, he wanted to know what new information about mad cow disease had come to light over and above what had already been known for eight years by meat importers and the Department of Agriculture.

"They have given us 21 days," he said. "We are already holding the department responsible for our loss. If necessary, I will get a court order preventing them from destroying the meat."

The most common way of disposing of a large quantity of condemned meat is to dig a hole and dump it, he said.

③ MEAT (EAT)

# All UK beef imports must be destroyed'

CT 22/4/96

(3) MEAT

## OWN CORRESPONDENT

**JOHANNESBURG:** Several thousand tons of beef that have been imported from the United Kingdom and kept in quarantine must be destroyed or returned to England, according to meat experts.

A delegation was sent to the UK earlier this month to investigate the dangers of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or "mad cow" disease.

Its members, who included Meat Board general manager Dr Pieter Kempen and representatives of the departments of Agriculture and Health, found that British beef posed a possible threat to South African consumers.

In a statement yesterday, the Meat Board said although it was difficult to calculate precisely the quantity of British beef in the country as there were many importers, the amount was several thousand tons.

A shipment of 2 000 tons that had been blocked from entering the country two weeks ago would also have to be destroyed.

"In the light of the British prohibition on the sale of beef and beef products for human consumption, it would be irresponsible to the South African consumer if all beef imported from the UK was not destroyed forthwith," the statement said.

The ban on British beef should remain until the UK had been classified BSE-free. The statement suggested that the ban should be extended to other countries that could not provide a disease-free record for at least the past five years.

The precautions are in line with measures implemented by the United States and several Arab countries.

The Meat Board said that in addition to safeguarding public health, its recommendations were designed to prevent the disease spreading to South African herds.

"We shall have to do everything within our power to keep BSE out of our country," the Meat Board statement said. "To this end we shall have to determine if any carcass meal (cattle feed containing animal protein) has been imported."

It is unclear how BSE is spread. Veterinary surgeons in the UK suspect it is linked to cattle feeds that contain animal proteins. The disease can remain dormant for some time and can be detected only when it becomes active.

# Importers told to destroy British beef

Star 25/4/96

By PATRICK BULGER

Political Correspondent

Cape Town - The Cabinet yesterday ordered beef importers to dispose of all British beef following the mad cow disease scare in the UK.

(3) MEAT (REF)  
The Cabinet said it concurred with Agriculture Minister Dr Kraai van Niekerk on the refusal of entry of all beef imported from the United Kingdom and the instruction to importers to dispose, at their own expense, of all beef kept in bond, as well as meat on the way to South Africa.

# Cabinet backs beef destruction

CT 25/4/96  
**POLITICAL WRITER**

THE cabinet yesterday backed the decision by Agriculture Minister Dr Kraai van Niekerk to ban the import of British beef in the wake of the "mad cow disease" (BSE) scare — and ordered the destruction of all British beef, at the cost of importers.

It is estimated that there are about 9 000 tons of British beef in SA. About 57 000 tons were imported last year.

The SA Meat Board has also called for

~~BEF~~ (3) MEAT  
the destruction of beef and beef products imported from Britain.

"It would be irresponsible to the consumer if all beef imported from the UK was not destroyed," meat board spokesman Mr Pieter Kempen said in a statement. "We shall have to do everything in our power to keep the disease out of our country."

"The effects of destroying heads of cattle as a result of BSE outbreak in our country will be devastating to feedlots, producers and ... small farmers alike," Kempen said.

# SA importers angry at order to destroy British beef valued at R17,5-m

Star 26/4/96

(~~MEAT~~) ③ MEAT

Who will foot the bill depends on whether irrefutable links between mad cow and Creutzfeldt-Jakob diseases are found

By NIKKI WHITFIELD

The Cabinet's order that local importers destroy around 2 500 tons of bonded British beef valued at about R17,5-million has angered importers who face a loss and the Meat Board is urging Government to bear the cost.

It is the latest development in this country in the international arguments over what's called "mad cow disease" that has made British beef suspect and banned by the European Union and in several other countries.

"It's all good and well for the Cabinet to make decisions like this, but who's going to pay for it?" said Eddie Bielovich, chairman of the National Federation of Meat Traders.

"If something has been allowed by the Government in the first place, surely it should be their call to foot the bill if they decide to change things?"

Dr Pieter Kempen, general manager of the Meat Board, agreed with Bielovich.

"The responsibility lies with the Government. They allowed the imports in the first place, so they should destroy it."

The haggle over who must pay is not confined to South Africa. Britain has for weeks been bargaining with the European Union over how many suspect cattle must be slaughtered for the international ban to be lifted - and who will compensate the beef farmers.

The latest UK Ministry of Agriculture plan to win back approval with its trading partners on the Continent is a sacrifice of 40 000 cows.

British beef has been bonded in warehouses in SA since the Department of Agriculture slapped a ban on it last month.

Kempen estimated about 2 500 tons of beef at R7 per kg had been seized. However, he said the Meat Board did support the call for it to be destroyed.

"We aren't worried about the public's health because we don't believe there's much danger of mad cow disease being passed on to humans. But we support the call for it to be banned simply because we cannot afford to let BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow disease) enter into herds in this country."

The human form of mad cow

disease is Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. A dozen or so people have died of it in Europe over the past decade.

Deon Joubert, parliamentary officer of the Department of Agriculture, said whether importers would be compensated for the meat they had imported and the costs they would incur in getting rid of it remained to be seen.

"A lot depends of the scientific evidence as to whether there is a risk between mad cow disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob.

"If it is found there is no risk, the countries taking the decision to ban it will be at the receiving end of the payment stick."

British Trade Minister Anthony Nelson has urged the SA Government to reconsider its ban on imports of British beef.

Nelson is in South Africa for the "Britain Means Business" trade show in Durban this week.

In discussions with KwaZulu Natal agriculture MEC George Bartlett, Nelson pointed out that British beef had been declared safe by the EU Commission, the World Health Organisation and other experts after the mad cow disease scare.

# Local beef gets lean, clean bill of health

(3) MENT CT 3/7/96

OWN CORRESPONDENT

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JOHANNESBURG: South African beef is leaner and healthier than beef elsewhere, the first study on the nutritional and fat content of local beef has shown.

Until now, nutritional values for beef quoted in South Africa have been of foreign origin and misleading in the local context, the Red Meat Industry said yesterday.

The study was conducted by six independent institutions under the leadership of the Agricultural Research Council.

Researchers found the average

South African carcass contains less than 20% fat, although this is affected by breeding, feeding and fat trimming. Overseas figures put the average fat content of carcasses at over 30%.

The study also found local consumers most often choose beef from young animals, containing 13% fat.

A 100 gram portion of South African beef contributes less than a third of the daily recommended cholesterol intake, the report says.

Nutrient-dense beef provides three minerals, five vitamins, iron and proteins.



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GE TWO

# Vleissentraal revamps itself

Edward West

20 7/6/96

VLEISSENTRAAL Co-operative — holding company of listed meat and leather group Kolosus Holdings — has changed its corporate structure to simplify its operations.

The co-operative said the R3bn-a-year meat group had been restructured after deregulation of the meat industry had dramatically changed its operating environment.

Vleissentraal was one of the co-operatives to head for the JSE through the listing of Kolosus.

This followed changes to the Land Bank's loan terms and an amendment in the Co-operatives Act in 1994 which prompted industrial co-operatives to restructure into companies.

Directors said yesterday Vleissentraal no longer enjoyed the full support of all primary co-operatives or fulfilled the role of agent and marketer of livestock.

By ridding itself of its complex structure the group would be free to enter into alliances, issue shares to

strategic partners and to make acquisitions, the company said.

"Vleissentraal Holdings will in future devote its full attention to its investments, particularly in the listed Kolosus Holdings, and arrange the mutual relationships of its members on a co-operative basis."

Vleissentraal has been restructured into three operating divisions, mainly livestock, Agmex and agencies.

The shareholders in the new Vleissentraal would initially be unchanged to those of the old company, but would have different shareholdings.

However, as Vleissentraal's shares were traded in due course, share registers would increasingly differ, the company said.

In the six months to November Kolosus posted a 9,7% decline in attributable profit before exceptional items to R23,9m after the take-over of Silveroak Industries pushed up the interest bill and cut the bottom line.

Kolosus' sales increased 31,9% to R936,1m, but finance charges surged 136,5% to R19,8m.

③ MEAT

## Beef exports to double as new markets open

Louise Cook

3 MEAT (REPT)

PRETORIA.— Beef exports were set to double to at least 4 000 tons by the end of the year following investigations into new markets by a special export forum, sources said yesterday.

The move follows a recent reclassification of SA as a foot and mouth disease-free zone. The most likely new markets were Pacific Rim countries, North America and the Caribbean.

Meat Board manager Wessie Wessels said until now SA could export beef only to central African countries and Indian Ocean islands due to the world ban.

However, last month the agriculture department managed to get the French to reclassify SA, giving the beef industry a new status and unlocking "massive" export opportunities.

These were being investigated by a special export forum under the auspices of the Meat Board. Beef exporter David Gluckman said the international beef market as well as the SA market were very volatile.

"It is premature to name potential foreign earnings or export quantities," he said. "But there is certainly massive potential."

"Markets are collapsing all over the world at the moment. This issue is so important that we have no choice other than to explore it."

Red Meat Producers' Organisation GM Gerhard Schutte said the first beef would probably be exported to the Pacific Rim within weeks.

But breaking into the new markets and getting established would be "very difficult". Gluckman said SA would be facing competition from Australia and Argentina — countries with lucrative government export subsidies.

"If Europe had to cut down on subsidies — not a likely move — it would open up markets into Angola and Mozambique."

Red Meat Producers' Organisation chairman Gerrie Greyling said SA's new status would result in a "cautious approach" to the movement of livestock and meat in southern Africa.

SA, a net beef importer, last year imported 51 000 tons, mainly for processing. Only 2 000 tons were exported.

BD 13/6/96



BD 31719.6

## SA beef 'is leaner than US meat'

3 MEAT

AN EIGHT-year research project has found SA beef to be much leaner than previously assumed, and not as fatty as US beef, results released in Johannesburg yesterday showed.

The study was carried out for the SA red meat industry by the Agricultural Research Council at Irene, Pretoria.

This was the first study to quantify the nutrient composition of SA beef, the red meat industry said.

Previously SA nutritionists had to rely on overseas data.

The study found the average fat content of SA beef carcasses declined from 32% in 1949 to 18% in 1981 and 13% in 1994.

Beef from the US contained on average 30% carcass fat.

The research was conducted on 54 carcasses comprising the 18 classes of beef available in SA.

No fat was trimmed from any of the samples.

The nutrient data was examined and showed that SA beef was nutrient-dense in protein, B vitamins and minerals, of which iron was one example.

Other significant research results were that only about 40% of the total fatty acids in SA beef were saturated, and cuts from the same carcass varied in fat content from 4% to 24%.

A 100g portion of cooked beef provided more than 100% of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin B12. And beef was an excellent source of iron.

The research results would be used in an advertising campaign, the industry said.

This campaign would have as its theme: "SA beef is good for you," the red meat industry's statement said. — Sapa.

# Good moos: SA beef is lean, healthy

ARG 4/21/96

3 MEAT

## Health Reporter

THERE'S good moos for lovers of South African beef - they can forget about mad cow disease thanks to our lean and healthy cattle.

Not only is our beef leaner than the foreign stuff, but it's also safer to eat.

This is the message from the red meat industry, which has released the results of the first local research on the nutritional content of South African beef.

For those who enjoy a hearty steak, eat on ...

The most significant research finding is that the beef consumed most often in South Africa contains only 13 percent carcass fat compared with 30 percent in that con-

sumed most often in the United States.

So it's okay to bring that steak back into your diet, provided you trim off the fat, of course.

Research results also show that 40 percent of total fatty acids in South African beef are saturated - that is, bad for you - with the remainder being poly-unsaturated and mono-unsaturated fatty acids and lipids.

Different cuts from the same carcass vary in fat content from four to 24 percent and the good news is that it's not just the expensive cuts that have a low fat content.

Beef is, furthermore, an excellent source of food iron as well as vitamin B12, which is not found in plant sources.

And it seems that feeding hormones to cows, widely practised in South Africa, poses no dangers to consumer health.

Certain hormones are banned and by law a strict 90-day "washing out" period before the animal is slaughtered, during which no hormones are fed to the cow, is required.

Random testing of beef has found no traces of hormones.

The eight-year South African research project was initiated in 1987 under the auspices of the Agricultural Research Council in Irene, Gauteng.

The council commissioned institutions such as the Medical Research Council, the Department of Health and the

South African Bureau of Standards to determine nutritional values of beef.

The beef values are the first to be measured in South Africa. No information is available on pork and mutton.

The fat content of beef is also influenced by breeding and feeding techniques and whether fat is trimmed from the carcass.

The Heart Foundation has welcomed the research findings, saying the new figures will help consumers make healthy and educated nutritional choices.

The Heart Foundation encourages a low-fat diet which includes a wide variety of foods to ensure an adequate intake of all nutrients.

## SA retains UK beef ban

3 MEAT  
Louise Cook

PRETORIA — Government said yesterday it would confiscate any consignment of imported UK beef to SA.

Agriculture department director-general Frans van der Merwe said no import permits would be issued until SA, which banned imports amid the mad-cow disease scare earlier this year, was satisfied the UK met new conditions.

Conservative Party MP Graham Riddick told the House of Commons on Wednesday that an SA company had ordered UK beef worth £250 000 — the first order from outside the UK since the ban in March.

Van der Merwe said the import was not illegal, but removing it from the harbour would be

BD 5/7/96

AGRICULTURE — MEAT

1996 — 1997

## Forum takes on illegal importers

~~ILLEGAL~~ imports of ~~dairy~~ and meat products, worth millions of rands, are now being "contained", writes DON ROBERTSON. (3) MEAT

The Forum for Combating Illegal Imports, a body made up of control boards, was established three months ago and has been successful in causing illegal importers to be apprehended. Lack of controls at border posts forced the boards to introduce their own measures.

The forum's campaign has been linked to a joint business initiative in which the SA Chamber of Business is playing a big role. It ties in with a decision taken in April to enlist the help of British customs officials who will be stationed at border posts for the next year.

It is estimated that smuggling has cost the treasury about R12-billion in lost import duties.

Illegal imports of meat have disrupted the local industry, says Meat Board managing director Pieter Kempen. "Up to 4 000 tons of mutton a month were filtered into the system because of the lack of controls at harbours, but our efforts have largely stopped all this."

ST(BT) 4/8/96

## EU deal 'may hit SA beef sector'

<sup>198</sup> 2/28/96  
HARARE — The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions has warned that a proposed free trade agreement between SA and the European Union could have a devastating effect on beef production in southern Africa.

Following a trade meeting of the confederation in Harare, chairman David Hasluck said such an agreement would result in unfair competition.

He called on member states of the SA Development Community to investigate the mandate relat-

(3) MEAT  
ing to the proposed agreement which was publicised recently by the EU commission.

The confederation felt the EU mandate, if effectively implemented, would have a significant and possibly devastating effect on the region's beef production, he said.

Any agreement which allowed subsidised agricultural production in developed countries to supplant commercial agricultural production in southern Africa should be seen as being contrary to the interests of agricultural development in the region. — Sapa.

## Disease affects SA ostrich meat exports

BD 27/8/96

~~3~~ (3) MEAT

CAPE TOWN — Newcastle Disease has broken out in SA's leading ostrich farming area and is affecting meat exports to the European Union, a producers' association said yesterday.

The Klein Karoo co-operative, based in Oudtshoorn, said 60 farms were under quarantine and meat from their birds

could not be exported. The meat was safe for human consumption but could carry bacteria that might lead to outbreaks of Newcastle Disease, a respiratory ailment which affects birds.

About 80% of the value of an ostrich is in its hide, while meat and feathers account for the rest. — Reuter.

# Meat Board may go privatisation route

③ MEAT BD 10/10/96

Louise Cook

THE meat industry is set for a major shake-up, including possible privatisation of the Meat Board.

Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) GM Fritz de Jager said yesterday at the top of the list of priorities was the question of how to deal with the board's R220m assets should it privatise.

A number of organisations in the industry felt they should be transferred to a special trust, he said. Among these were the National Federation of Meat Traders, the RPO, the SA Pork Producers' Organisation, the Association of Meat Packers, the

Council for Hides, Skins and Leather, the SA Feedlot Association and the Red Meat Abattoir Society. "The capital has to remain intact, but if overheads can be reduced, return on investment should go a long way to fund essential services for the industry. These include information gathering, promotions, research and training," De Jager said.

However, this would "not necessarily" mean the end to compulsory levies imposed on farmers — a highly contentious issue which farmers and organisations such as the Organisation of Livestock Producers have opposed in the Constitutional Court.

Agriculture and Land Minister Derek Hanekom would probably be asked to approve a small levy "in case it is needed in the future".

Meat Board manager Jurie Erasmus said some of the board's functions, such as carcass classification and hygiene inspection, could be privatised immediately. However, any such moves were subject to Hanekom's approval.

Meanwhile, asset transfers by agricultural control boards remain under investigation by the Jacobson committee appointed by Hanekom last month. Industry sources said the committee would also look at the proposals concerning the Meat Board.



# Tons of suspect beef shipped back to Britain

(S) (3) MEAT

Despite government orders to destroy the imported 'mad cow' meat, incensed importers succeed in having it returned

Nov 23/10/96

By MELANIE-ANN FERIS

Thousands of tons of British beef which had been bonded in warehouses in South Africa since the Department of Agriculture slapped a ban on it in March this year - at the height of the mad cow disease scare - have been shipped back to the United Kingdom.

In April the Cabinet ordered the destruction of about 2 500 tons of meat valued at about R17,5-million, but incensed importers called on the Government to bear the expenses.

Dr Gideon Bruckner, director of veterinary public health at the Department of Agriculture, said yesterday the meat had been exported back to the UK at the importers' expense. He said importers had been refunded to a certain extent for the meat that had been returned.

Some of the rejected meat had also been dumped into the ocean - about 50km off the ports of entry - under supervision of the department, Bruckner said.

One hundred containers of meat, weighing approximately 4 700kg and priced at about R15/kg, is still awaiting shipment to the UK before the end of this month.

"If the meat is not shipped

back it will be destroyed, probably by incineration," he said.

Sapa reported this week that mountains of beef stockpiled in Europe because of the mad cow crisis could be used to feed the poor following a call earlier this week by Irish Agriculture Minister Ivan Yates.

## Importers refunded to a certain extent

Ireland, which currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency, plans to raise the "food aid" proposal at a world food summit in Rome in mid-

November, Yates said, without elaborating on the plan.

Beef stocks which have been building in cold storage rooms since the European Union introduced measures to prop up a market devastated by the mad cow scare are expected to reach about 700 000 tons by the end of the year.

The ban on British meat is still being enforced in South Africa.

Bruckner said yesterday his department was confident that none of the banned meat had been allowed out of the containers in storage and distributed for sale in SA, although there had been suggestions from importers that the meat be exported to other African countries.

"Our stand was that what is not fit for South African consumption is not fit for consumption by other African countries," he said.

# Staff cuts inevitable as Meat Board gears up to become market driven

③ MEAT 20 24/10/96

**Louise Cook**

THE Meat Board would be replaced by a non-profit company next year with severe budget constraints and cuts to its 456-strong staff likely, the board said yesterday.

Meat Board GM Pieter Kempen said it was not yet clear how many employees would be affected, but government would be called upon to pay compulsory levies in the medium term to limit staff and service cuts.

"Over the past three years the board was forced to cut its budget by 50%, but it is still facing a R15m shortfall this year. We need levies to keep going, but hope to be fully independent in the long term." No rise in the levy of R5,61 an animal was planned.

The board's assets of between R180m and R200m would be transferred to a trust. Part of the assets came from the sale this year of the board's headquarters for R4,3m — the rest was collected for a meat surplus removal scheme, now redundant. The trust

would be responsible for investing and managing the capital and the operating expenditure of the new company would be financed only by returns on capital.

One of the functions of the new company would be the "continued stabilisation" of the industry, including market development and promotions. Other functions currently undertaken by the board, such as carcass inspections and hygiene classifications, would no longer be financed from levies. Levies would, however, finance functions "in the general interests of the industry" such as statistics and information gathering and distribution.

Asked what would happen if Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom turned down requests for further compulsory levy payments, Kempen said the industry was holding talks with government. Hanekom was believed to be opposed to government intervention in agricultural marketing.

Meanwhile, other industry role players were upbeat about the planned privatisation with the Feedlot Association, Hides and Skins Board and Federation of Meat Traders saying the board would become market driven for the first time.

Feedlot Association chairman Dave Ford said the meat industry — unlike the maize industry — was co-operating effectively.

KOLOSUS (3) MEAT (455)

HEMMED IN (455)

FM 11/1/96

Group MD Tito Vorster describes financial 1996 as a watershed for Kolosus as it completed its transformation from a co-op into what he calls "a leading diversi-

- **ACTIVITIES:** Processes, markets and distributes meat products; produces leather and hide products.
- **CONTROL:** Vleissentraal Holdings 39,3%.
- **CHAIRMAN:** J F Besselaar. MD: A T Vorster.
- **CAPITAL STRUCTURE:** 60m ords. Market capitalisation: R219m.
- **SHARE MARKET:** Price: 365c. Yields: 6,3% on dividend; 6,4% on earnings; p:e ratio, 15,6; cover, 1,0. 12-month high, 670c; low, 360c. Trading volume last quarter, 856 949 shares.

| Year to May 31         | '95   | '96   |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| ST debt (Rm)           | 48,6  | 114,7 |
| LT debt (Rm)           | 159,2 | 176,3 |
| Debt:equity ratio      | 0,70  | 0,98  |
| Shareholders' interest | 0,47  | 0,38  |
| Int & leasing cover    | 2,9   | 2,0   |
| Return on cap (%)      | 9,8   | 10,7  |
| Turnover (Rbn)         | 1,43  | 1,81  |
| Pre-int profit (Rm)    | 61,9  | 82,5  |
| Pre-int margin (Rm)    | 4,3   | 4,6   |
| Earnings (c)           | 77,2  | 23,3  |
| Dividends (c)          | 13,0  | 23,0  |
| Tangible NAV (c)       | 491   | 492   |

fied industrial group that will satisfy the demands of not only the local, but also the international markets."

It involved radical curtailment of operations in the highly cyclical wholesale fresh meat market and a redirection of resources into manufacturing activities.

Equally important was the additional R186m investment in the leather industry through controversial acquisition of Silveroak Industries. This, says chairman Hannes Besselaar, further enhanced the group's position as SA's leading leather producer, which in turn has promoted prospects for increased involvement in foreign markets.

Vorster concedes that, short-term, the Silveroak deal has impaired both profitability and balance sheet structure. Finance director Ronnie van Rensburg quantifies this with the view that Kolosus without Silveroak would have increased attributable EPS by about 20% instead of the marginal 3% improvement reported before exceptional items (mainly restructuring costs).

In the case of the balance sheet he notes that the group immediately after the takeover had borrowings of R380m, with debt:equity ratio of 1,27, up from 0,70 at the previous balance sheet date.

By year-end, and by the FM's calculation, borrowings had fallen to R290m (net of cash) and the debt ratio was under 1 — still excessive, but materially better.

Management are obviously confident the initial costs of acquiring Silveroak had largely been absorbed by year-end, and that from now on the benefits should flow as duplication of management and marketing structures are eliminated and production facilities rationalised. This view presumably influenced the decision to pay out almost all 1996's net earnings (after exceptional items) in dividends.

It is as well that Vorster and Van Rensburg have gone to considerable lengths to fill shareholders in on the effects of the Silveroak deal as the financial statements without this background are, at best, a mixed bag.

Turnover and operating profit were up 27% and 33% respectively, but the benefits here were largely absorbed by higher interest charges which left pre-tax profit only R1m higher than in 1995. Headline earnings, as indicated earlier, reflected an improvement of only 3%.

Profitability ratios were up across the board. Apart from the improvement in trading margin, gross returns on total assets and capital employed were both higher though, at 10,7% and 14,1%, still leave something to be desired. The same applies to ROE of 14,2% based on headline earnings from 13,8% previously.

Negatives mostly relate to the balance sheet. The unsatisfactory gearing position is acknowledged by Van Rensburg who notes that a rights issue is being considered — "but only at a stage when the share price of the group justifies it." The need is underscored by an interest cover which has dipped to a precarious two times, as well as the narrow debt cover (the ratio of cash flow to borrowings) of only 0,2.

In both cases these ratios are well down on 1995 levels though, if the benefits of Silveroak flow though as expected, the next financial statements could look better even without a capital injection.

Kolosus may well have found itself in a Catch 22 situation. The financial position has clearly reinforced the downtrend in the share price which started around the beginning of this calendar year. At 365c, the price is only 5c off its 12-month low which, in turn, reflected a 46% slump from the year's high. It is also 26% below net worth which, by itself, makes a rights issue unviable unless one is desperate.

The best action would probably be for the group to concentrate on consolidating its position to maximise performance of its existing assets — with luck it could find that in a year's time the need for

fresh capital will largely have fallen away. It could then look at fresh expansion opportunities free of the present financial constraints. *Brian Thompson*

# Beef shipment seized in Durban

Louise Cook

A LARGE illegal shipment of beef — possibly contaminated with the “mad cow disease” afflicting British cattle herds — had been intercepted and confiscated at Durban harbour, the agriculture department said yesterday.

Veterinary public health director Gideon Bruckner said the shipment — 12 containers with 205 tons of beef, originating in Rotterdam — was discovered at the weekend.

Bruckner said the local importers, Weddel Swift and Chestor Wholesalers, were not under suspicion, but the European Commission's fraud unit had been asked to investigate. He declined to say who was under suspicion.

Weddel Swift director Henry Badenhorst said: “We bought a consignment of French beef from France. We were dealing at arm's length with the French supplier. We are most concerned that such irregularities have occurred, which could affect

the export status of France to SA.”

The illegal beef was the first to reach SA since the ban in March, Bruckner said. “As a result of the tight controls, any irregularity is spotted immediately.”

The fraud was discovered when agriculture department public health inspectors found that contents of cartons differed from specifications on import documents.

The containers were supposed to carry beef from approved plants on the European continent only — but in fact carried mixed meats from different plants in Europe and the UK. It appeared the packaging of the consignment had been tampered with — possibly at Rotterdam harbour, where beef from non-approved European abattoirs as well as from the UK might have been added to the original consignment.

Durban harbour officials said that in the case of beef imports to SA, each container was checked before leaving the harbour. The suspect beef, 8 000 cartons containing a total of 205 602kg, was confiscated,

Bruckner said.

The SA, European and UK veterinary authorities were collaborating on the probe.

Based on SA's meat consumption of 21,3kg a person a year, about 7 000 people could have been fed for a year from the shipment. If the meat had been used in processed products such as polonies, even more consumers would have been exposed.

In March this year, SA followed the EU's ban on all UK beef after fears of a possible link between bovine spongiform encephalopathy, found in some UK herds, and the human killer, Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease. The ban has not yet been lifted and will remain in force for as long as the EU maintains its stance.

Meanwhile, negotiations between the EU and the UK continue on the slaughtering of British cattle suspected of having the disease, in an effort to eradicate mad cow disease from Britain.

See Page 12

CT 7/11/96

# Little Karoo farmers hope Congo scare will blow over

LISA TEMPLETON

(3) MEAT

1500

OSTRICH farmers fear Congo fever will harm the industry — their “bread and butter” — but hope the scare will blow over.

The farmers in the Little Karoo still don't know how the outbreak — which resulted in one death and 16 people being hospitalised — will affect business.

“We are worried because farming is our livelihood, and we have too little information to go on while the outbreak is being investigated. No-one knows yet how the disease spread,” said Mr Stephen Muller, a director of Karoo Valley Farms.

“I hope in a week or two it will blow over. We will have to wait and see,” he said.

Mr Jack Klass, who owns a large ostrich farm, said he was worried, but “I reckon it will be all right”.

He said he and other farmers had been inconvenienced by the halt in slaughtering at Oudtshoorn's two abattoirs. Ostriches that had been intended for slaughter now had to be fed.

Meanwhile, the owners of tourist show farms, which are popular with both local

and foreign tourists, say their business has not been affected by the Congo fever outbreak.

Mr Alex Hooper, owner of Highgate Ostrich Show Farm, said they were receiving the same number of visitors and there had been no cancellations.

“We took ostrich meat off our restaurant's menu on Monday and have been serving beef for three days, but people have been demanding that we serve ostrich meat,” he said.

His guides had been informing visitors about the outbreak.

Mr Dougie Bester, manager of the Congo Ostrich Farm, said foreigners continued to flood on to the farm, but about 10% of the bookings had been cancelled — mostly by school groups.

“I just hope there won't be any long-term effect because of bad publicity, as there was with mad cow disease,” he said.

People tended to confuse the word Congo with Congo, as in the Congo Caves, and thought there are many sick ostriches.

Bester said their restaurant had also stopped serving ostrich meat.

MEAT HELD BACK

# Ostrich abattoir closed pending test findings

CT 7/11/96  
③ MEAT

**OUTSHOORN:** Veterinary and health experts meeting here following the Congo fever outbreak in the area have drawn up revised safety precautions for all abattoirs. **JACKIE CAMERON** reports.

**T**HE Klein Karoo abattoir at which workers were infected with the deadly Congo fever virus, will remain closed — and its ostrich meat stockpile kept in storage — until scientists have completed a research project on the effects of the virus in ostriches.

This was the outcome of a meeting in Oudtshoorn yesterday at which veterinary and health experts also revised the safety precautions to be taken at all abattoirs following the outbreak.

It emerged at the meeting that between six and 20 people a year contract the disease in South Africa, mostly from contact with sheep.

Dr Dirk Verwoerd, programme manager of the ostrich unit at Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, said: "We looked at the human and safety aspects, and how we could prevent this from being repeated. Nothing has ever been done specifically to prevent this virus.

"Klein Karoo has acted prudently by withdrawing meat. The abattoir will not be

opened for 14 days at least. If no secondary cases emerge, one can say it's safe and they can start with a clean slate. Meat will be held in storage awaiting the results."

He said a directive would be sent to all abattoirs advising them to rinse safety overalls and boots in an insecticide geared to prevent Congo fever.

"Birds for slaughter must be treated in the last month for ticks. They will be inspected before slaughter. We won't allow animals with obvious ticks into the abattoir."

Professor Robert Swanepoel, of the National Institute of Virology, said he had advised that ostriches in the area should be treated with an insecticide and isolated until they are "clean and safe".

He was reluctant to comment about the ostrich meat which is being held in storage and said that tourists wanted to eat ostrich meat on the farms.

"I told them this meat was their problem. If there's a big industry at stake, they should keep their noses clean and do the best thing."

# Squeeze is on ostrich industry

## ③ MEAT

JACKIE CAMERON

CF 8/11/96

RETAILERS have cancelled ostrich meat orders, bringing slaughtering to a standstill at a Gauteng ostrich abattoir, as panic spreads about the possibility of contracting the deadly Congo fever virus from handling raw ostrich meat.

At least 14 Oudtshoorn people — all workers at the stricken Klein Karoo abattoir — were positively diagnosed yesterday as having the virus, a hospital spokesman said.

He said two other patients from the abattoir "will also probably be confirmed as having the virus."

Mrs Joyce Japha, 44, died earlier this week as a result of the virus.

Mr Hendy Matthews, of the Oryx Tanning Company abattoir in Gauteng, which supplies the local market, said: "The outbreak of Congo fever at the Oudtshoorn abattoir has been absolutely bad for business. We have stopped slaughtering because customers have cancelled orders."

"This is starting to have a similar effect as mad cow disease had in Britain. I think a lot of farmers will feel the pinch. Birds must be slaughtered, and this is the time of year when chicks are bought."

He said the ostrich industry had been "riding on a good wave for the last 10 to 15 years and I think we've got blood on the nose here".

Ostrich meat exports may be affected by the latest outbreak of the disease, says Mr Gerrie Botha, general manager of the Grahamstown Ostrich Export Abattoir.

"This has happened at a terrible time for the export markets. We had Italy and Portugal here doing export inspections. We must instil confidence in the product again. No one will trust it until someone proves that it is safe to handle and eat the meat."

He said current export customers had not yet been affected.

Abattoirs in Graaff-Reinet and Gauteng reported that their export orders had not been affected.

## Ostrich farmers feel the financial pinch

Samantha Sharpe

③ MEAT

BD 8/11/96

CAPE TOWN — SA's ostrich farmers faced a serious cash-flow crisis following an outbreak of Congo fever in Oudtshoorn, which had shut down co-operative Klein Karoo's two abattoirs and halted distribution of all meat slaughtered since Tuesday last week, industry sources said yesterday.

The co-operative is the primary depot for ostrich meat distribution in SA and supplies about 80% to 85% of world ostrich meat demand.

It closed its abattoirs, at which several workers contracted Congo fever, earlier this week.

Klein Karoo Koöperasie MD Attie de Waal said it was too early to forecast the shutdown's financial implications and the impact on meat sales.

However, any abattoir closure was obviously a source of extreme concern for local farmers who were paid for their ostrich meat on a daily basis.

Farmers in the area said it cost about R70 a month to feed a bird, many of which were destined for the abattoir earlier this month.

Meanwhile, Safari Ostrich Farm owner Ida Lipschitz said the ostrich tourism industry appeared largely unaffected. "There have been no booking cancellations," she said.



# Oudtshoorn ostrich industry hit hard by disease outbreak

3 MEAT

ADELE BALETA  
STAFF REPORTER

ARG 9/11/96

The ostrich industry in the Southern Cape has been dealt a serious blow by the outbreak of Congo-Crimean haemorrhagic fever and there are fears frozen stock for exportation could run out.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission chairman Desmond Tutu was expected to visit Tygerberg Hospital yesterday to see patients being treated for Congo fever.

A total of 14 of the 16 patients airlifted to the hospital from Oudtshoorn were discharged yesterday.

Chris Coetzee, chairman of the board of the Klein Karoo co-op, confirmed that slaughtering had stopped until the Health Department had completed its investigations.

This could take another two weeks, Mr Coetzee said.

He said the tragedy had affected 500 to 600 farmers, who had all put a moratorium on slaughtering their stock.

Mr Coetzee said farmers were particularly hard hit because just prior to the outbreak of the fever the abattoir at the co-op had been out of operation for about four weeks for repairs.

"We had just started slaughtering again when this thing hit us. It will mean up to two months of no slaughtering which has had a serious effect on our ability to provide fresh meat to export."

Mr Coetzee agreed the psychological effects of the Congo fever scare would damage the industry in the way "mad cow" disease had affected consumers of British beef.

But there were several steps being taken to address the problem.

Willem Burger, a veterinary surgeon from the Ostrich Centre in Oudtshoorn who also works at the co-op, said out Congo fever was endemic to Africa.

Between six and 20 people were infected every year in South Africa.

Dr Burger said that in future ostriches would be placed in quarantine at least 30 days before being slaughtered to rid them of all ecto parasites.

To clarify unanswered questions, 10 clean, live ostriches have been sent to the Institute for Virology in Johannesburg.

"We will also do a serological survey by collecting blood samples from the different farms in the Klein Karoo to try and pinpoint the origination of the problem," he said.

## Congo fever hurts ostrich meat exports

3 MEAT

Louise Cook

ED 12/11/96

THE R31m ostrich meat export market was expected to suffer following the recent destruction of 300 tons of meat, industry sources said yesterday.

The Klein Karoo Co-operative in Oudtshoorn, handling 80% of SA ostrich product exports, destroyed all meat from birds slaughtered after October 22 after an outbreak of Congo fever claimed the life of an abattoir employee and landed others in hospital last week. Klein Karoo manager Coenie Coetzee said damage to the export industry would be clear once importing countries reacted to quality certificates issued by the agriculture department following last week's setback.

Co-operative spokesman Ben de Kock said meat made up only 20% of total exports. Feathers and hides made up the rest.

**③ MEAT**  
**New meat producers' body formed**

80 18/11/96  
THE country's 70 000 beef, mutton, pig and goat farmers agreed to unite under one organisation on Friday after decades of division along racial lines and by the size of their operations.

Traditionally about 10 000 white, commercial red meat farmers have been represented by the Red Meat Producers Organisation, but now they are to combine with the Emerging Red Meat Producers Forum, which represents about 60 000 mainly black, small-scale livestock farmers.

# Congo fever blamed for abattoir worker's death

Samantha Sharpe

CAPE TOWN — Ostrich co-operative Klein Karoo Koöperasie has shut two Oudtshoorn abattoirs following a suspected outbreak of Congo fever linked to abattoir workers who were exposed to ostrich meat.

The blood-borne virus has already killed one person, with 21 others considered primary victims.

Health sources said workers had probably contracted the virus handling contaminated meat at the abattoirs, and they had not ruled out the possibility of further infection through the consumption of infected meat.

Klein Karoo MD Attie de Waal said the co-operative had closed the abattoirs, which employ between 300 and 350 people, and had halted the distribution of all ostrich meat slaughtered since Tuesday last week. Prior to that the abattoirs were closed for a month of annual maintenance.

The month-long shutdown meant that the only ostrich meat still on sale was from birds slaughtered before the third week in September and was free from possible contamination, he said.

De Waal said it was too early to determine how much the abattoir shutdowns could cost the ostrich industry and for how long production would be suspended. However, further clarification from the health authorities about the exact nature and source of the outbreak was expected within the next

few days, he said.

The industry launched an advertising campaign recently punting ostrich meat as a healthy, low-cholesterol alternative to beef, mutton and pork.

Tygerberg Hospital infectious diseases head Mark Beale said test results confirming the outbreak of Congo fever — or a similar haemorrhagic fever — were expected late last night.

A "massive mobilisation of health care services" was already under way, with a team dispatched to Oudtshoorn to establish the condition of patients.

However, it appeared that the situation was under control, with three of the four patients airlifted to Tygerberg Hospital earlier this week in an improved condition, Beale said.

Kathryn Strachan reports that Prof Bob Swanepoel, director of the special pathogens unit at the SA National Institute of Virology, said he believed the initial diagnosis of Congo Fever was correct.

He said about 30% of Congo Fever cases were fatal. The disease began with a high fever followed by a rash. After about six days patients started to haemorrhage.

The disease was transmitted via a tick, but could be passed on through contact with the blood and tissue of infected animals, he said.

In SA there are between six and 20 cases each year, mostly involving farmers who have been in contact with the blood of their livestock.

③ MEAT BO 5/11/96

## Umbrella body for red meat producers

③ MEAT

BY NORMAN CHANDLER

Pretoria Bureau

Red meat producers are to be represented by one organisation in future.

A steering committee established earlier this year has recommended that emerging and established producers form one

umbrella organisation by 1998 to look after the interests of all producers, Aggrey Mahanjana of the South African Agricultural Union said on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Emerging Red Meat Producers' Forum was established to handle the affairs of emerging commercial red meat producers.

Mar 20/11/96

# Take your head out of the sand: Ostrich is in!

By BABALWA SHOTA, LESLEY MOFOKENG and LUCAS LEDWABA

THE rich and famous are tucking into ostrich meat this festive season despite the recent Congo fever scare.

Ostrich burgers, ostrich fillets and even ostrich casseroles are gracing tables from the northern suburbs to "Egoli-by-the-sea", Umhlanga.

And store owners report that African foods of all kinds are taking off as the flavour of the new year.

The manager of an exotic butchery in Rivonia, Sandton, said people were buying ostrich meat.

"Many say they are a bit scared of contracting Congo fever but they buy the meat anyway," he said.

Some 300 tons of ostrich meat was destroyed when an employee at the

Oudtshoorn abattoir died after contracting Congo fever after coming into contact with contaminated ostrich meat in October.

Experts believe the blood of a single ostrich bitten by a tick carrying the virus was responsible for the death. About 16-million tons of ostrich meat, valued at R58-million, is exported annually.

Brent Buxton, the director of an upmarket food chain, said affluent people were "buying exotic foods of all kinds". His store in Umhlanga was doing brisk trade in ostrich meat, crocodile tails, quail eggs and rabbit as people prepared for the New Year bash.

"There's a positive sentiment that makes people commit to African styles and foods," he said. "Expensive local meats are more in demand

③ MEAT ST 29/12/96

this year than before."

Denise Greaves of Blue Marine foods, a Durban wholesaler, said: "Price is not the issue and the Congo fever scare hasn't affected business at all."

Victor Pereira, the manager of Craighall Meat Centre in Johannesburg, said Congo fever had not frightened people off ostrich meat. "Sales have definitely improved since the Congo fever scare. People are buying a lot of ostrich meat," he said.

The head of Oudtshoorn's ostrich research unit, Dr Willem Burger, has said that cooked ostrich meat is safe for consumption.

Raymond Martin, the manager of Country Meats in Lonehill, Sandton, said other kinds of game meat were also popular. "Most people buy eland and kudu," he said.

# Poultry, pork tariffs on menu with US

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON —The US would press SA not to raise tariffs on poultry and to remove barriers to pork imports, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said before leaving to take part in this weekend's meeting of the US-SA binational commission.

Glickman, who will be having talks with SA Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom, said he would also urge the government to rescind its decision not to accept US wheat grown in areas where there had been occurrences of karnal bunt, a fungus that damaged wheat but was harmless to humans.

The US is concerned that government will give in to pressures to hike tariffs on poultry. "I'll urge them to stand firm," Glickman said. Any increase would be "unfair" to both US producers and SA consumers.

BD 13/2/99 (SAFF) (3) MEAT  
Another irritant for the US is SA's requirement that pork be shipped frozen. "No other country" imposed this, Glickman said. "The science is not there to support it. I'm hopeful (the South Africans) will come to the same conclusion as everyone else."

On the wheat issue, Glickman noted SA inspectors had visited the US last year to judge the "integrity" of the US inspection system. They evidently were not persuaded that it was good enough to keep karnal bunt out of SA. "I'll urge them to reconsider."

The US ran a healthy surplus in the trade of agricultural, fish and forestry products with SA last year. Exports to SA rose 70% to \$330m, while imports from SA grew only 30% to \$121m.

Sapa-AFP reports from Brussels that European Union (EU) officials said yesterday the EU had cut by 10% the subsidies it paid to EU farmers on

beef exports to southern Africa following protests that cheap EU supplies were hitting the income of poor livestock producers in the region. However, the move fell short of SA's demand for the subsidies to be phased out altogether. "It is a move in the right direction but we do not see it making that much difference," an SA official said.

The row over beef subsidies underlines broader tensions over trade and development that have hampered progress towards an EU-SA free trade agreement. The EU subsidies have had a particularly negative effect on the income of beef producers in Namibia and Botswana. Pretoria has also complained that while subsidised EU beef flows into the region duty-free, it has no prospect of exporting to Europe because of the EU's high tariff levels.

The EU is determined to exclude beef from any free trade deal.

# EU pact 'will aggravate meat sector problems'

BO 18/2/97

(3) MEAT



Louise Cook

AN EXPECTED rise in local demand for meat could be catered for through trade with neighbouring countries rather than SA entering into a free trade agreement with the EU, says Red Meat Producers' Organisation GM Fritz de Jager.

Local demand for meat was likely to jump between 80% and 90% over the next 20 years but production would probably not go beyond 37%, De Jager said in Red Meat magazine.

"The only way for SA farmers to sur-

vive (the expected inflow of imports) is through greater exploitation of foreign niche markets."

De Jager argued that if SA farmers — who generally produced higher quality red meat — exported more, they would get better prices.

"SA will always remain a net importer of meat, (but) ... there is room for high quality cuts to be exported," De Jager said.

Meat exporting countries such as Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe — generally producers of lower quality meat cuts — could supply shortfalls in

SA, Swaziland, Lesotho, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. Countries in the Pacific Rim, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia were likely to be future importers of SA high quality meat.

De Jager warned that a free trade agreement between SA and the EU would aggravate the meat sector's problems in SA and those of its neighbours. "European beef can be imported at an average price of less than R6/kg, considerably less than local producer costs. SA's import tariff of 40% was in many cases not enough."

SA was powerless to fight back on

the grounds of dumping as the World Trade Organisation permitted this type of support to European farmers. In addition, Europe expected to export to SA but was not willing to import red meat from SA.

Meanwhile, US Agriculture Secretary Dan Gluckman said that the US would press SA to drop its import tariffs on pork and not to raise tariffs on poultry.

SA was the only country that insisted that pork had to be shipped frozen, a requirement that the US was hoping would be scrapped, he said.



# Cattlemen accuse Europe of 'dumping' cheap meat in SA

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

③ MEAT

ARU 3/3/97

Pretoria - Europe has been accused by Southern African cattle breeders of dumping cheap red meat on local markets to the detriment of the industry.

The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) says this violates a commitment by the European Union Council of Ministers.

Gerrit Schutte, RMPO general manager, says that members of the Southern African Meat Producers' Liaison Committee - representing producers in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe - "are deeply concerned at the continued provision for EU beef

exports to South Africa. Not only does South Africa have its own fully developed beef industry but it also provides a major market for other beef-producing countries in the region."

He said subsidisation of EU producers for meat exported to South Africa posed a threat to regional co-operation and broke Europe's commitment to take into account development co-operation with Southern Africa in general. There did not appear to be any coherent EU policy on the issue.

The volume of European beef exported to Southern Africa had increased dramatically since mid-1994 and prices were below wholesale prices on local markets, Mr Schutte said.

# Producers have beef about refunds

A LIAISON committee representing meat producers in Southern Africa says it is deeply concerned at the continued provision of export refunds for European Union (EU) beef exports to South Africa.

The Southern African Meat Producers Liaison Committee (SAM-PLC), a forum representing meat producers from Botswana, Lesotho,

Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, says not only does SA have its own fully developed beef industry, but it also provides a major market for other beef-producing countries in the Southern African region.

The EU export refunds, also pose a threat to the progress of regional cooperation among Southern African beef industries.

*3 MEAT Sowetan 3/3/97*

The issue was discussed at the last meeting of the SAMPLC, which took place in Bulawayo last month.

One of the burning questions at the meeting was why EU taxpayers' money should be used to support a cattle marketing scheme in northern Namibia, when taxpayers' money was also used to pay EU traders to export surplus beef to Southern Africa.

Since mid-1994 the volume of EU subsidised beef entering the Southern African market has increased dramatically. The value of EU beef entering the South African market, as a direct result of EU export refund payments, amount to hundreds of millions of rands.

This has serious implications for beef producers in Southern Africa.

# 'Europeans dumping cheap red meat on SA'

3 MEAT

Farmers say the local market is being flooded with beef exported from EU countries

By NORMAN CHANDLER  
Pretoria Bureau

Europe has been accused by southern African cattle producers of dumping tons of cheap red meat on local markets to the detriment of the industry.

The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) says this is in violation of a commitment made by the European Union Council of Ministers.

According to RPO general manager Gerrit Schutte, mem-

bers of the Southern African Meat Producers' Liaison Committee – representing producers in Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe – “are deeply concerned at the continued provision for EU beef exports to South Africa”.

“Not only does South Africa have its own fully developed beef industry but it also provides a major market for other beef producing countries in the region.”

He said subsidisation of EU producers for meat exported to

South Africa posed a threat to regional co-operation and broke Europe's commitment to take into account the objectives of development co-operation with southern Africa in general.

He said there did not appear to be any coherent EU policy on the issue.

“Why should EU taxpayers' money be used to support a cattle marketing scheme in northern Namibia when their money is also used to pay EU traders to export surplus beef to South Africa

on which Namibian farmers depend for their export market?” Schutte asked.

The volume of European beef exported to southern Africa has increased dramatically since 1994 and prices are below wholesale prices prevailing on local markets.

“The consequent loss of potential earnings is having serious implications for beef producers in South African and the region. The damage being done far outweighs the benefits derived by the European beef industry (and) the in-

Star 3/3/97  
come losses in both South Africa and Namibia exceed the annual volume of EU development assistance to this region,” he said.

■ A former provincial rugby player, Dr Piet van Zyl, has been appointed chairman of the RPO in succession to Gerrie Greyling, who has resigned because of ill health.

Van Zyl played for Free State, Western Province and Griqualand West, and was educated at the universities of the Free State and Stellenbosch.

# New appeal to EU against dumping of beef in SA

③ MEAT ~~744~~ CT(BR) 20/3/97 ~~744~~

**JOHN FRASER**

Brussels — Parliamentarians from the European Union and southern Africa launched a fresh appeal to the EU yesterday to stop dumping beef on the South African market.

The appeal was made at an assembly in Brussels attended by European MPs and their counterparts from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Rob Davies, an ANC MP, told journalists that the EU beef was sold at half the price domestic producers in Africa had to charge. He claimed this ran contrary to EU pledges to help rural development in Africa.

The EU has responded to complaints from South Africa by changing the way it categorises beef exports to South Africa, but Davies claimed this "has had no significant impact".

He said EU exports had shot up from 7 000 tons in 1993 to 47 000 tons last year. He suggested the harm being done by the beef dumping outweighed all the aid the EU gave southern Africa.

And he claimed that producers in neighbouring states such as Namibia were also affected. This complaint was backed up by Botswana MP Thembe Mogami, who stressed the historical importance of the South African

market for his country's farmers.

Namibian parliamentarian Siegfried Wohler said it was "inconsistent" of the EU to support farmers in his country while destroying their market in South Africa.

Alex Smith, the British Labour European MP, supported this claim saying the EU could "overnight undo the work of previous aid programmes". He said this would be "absurd".

# Beef import row continues

③ MEAT

BD 7/4/97

John Dluđu

THE recent concessions by the European Union (EU) to limit the damaging effect of subsidised beef exports to SA had had a minimal effect on reducing the plight of the domestic industry, a top parliamentarian said at the weekend.

The concessions followed SA complaints that its beef industry and that of its neighbours was reeling from the "dumping" of EU beef imports. EU-subsidised exports of frozen beef were being sold on the SA market at 50% below the domestic production price, government sources said. Although the EU recently took action to limit the negative effect of subsidised beef by increasing the landed price in SA, the ramifications on the local market had been minimal, African National Congress MP Rob Davies said.

Davies, who chairs the parliamentary trade and industry committee, had campaigned vigorously on behalf of SA beef producers in his capacity as a member of the

joint southern Africa parliamentary forum. He said that the subsidies issue was not in conformity with the developmental principles espoused by the EU in its co-operation negotiations with SA and in its relationship with the region.

Exports to SA of EU beef shot up to 47 000 tons in 1996, from 1993's 7 000 tons, according to news reports. SA's complaints on the beef issue have received a sympathetic hearing from the joint assembly of the EU and its partners in the Lomé Convention — African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The EU-ACP joint assembly has now called on the EU to "reclassify" SA so that export restitution payments on EU beef end.

However, Davies said the EU had yet to undertake an investigation into the issue.

"They (the EU) said they had asked SA for certain information before carrying out the investigation," he said.

Comment: Page 11

# Investigation launched into European beef-dumping claim

John Dlodlu

MEAT

BD 8/14/97

THE European Commission, the European Union's (EU's) executive, has launched an investigation into claims that its beef producers are dumping their products in SA.

An EU official in Brussels said yesterday commission authorities had received parts of a report, prepared by a Natal University academic, backing up SA's allegation that EU beef was being sold in SA at dumped prices.

The investigation, proposed by sympathetic EU states and the joint assembly of the EU and its 70 African,

Caribbean and Pacific partners in the Lomé convention, was being conducted by agricultural authorities in the commission.

This week, Rob Davies, chairman of the parliamentary committee on trade and industry, said the recent concessions by the EU on the beef issue had done little to alleviate the plight of local industry.

Before the EU concessions, export subsidies saw EU frozen beef being sold at 50% below the domestic production price in SA, hurting the local industry, according to SA government sources.

Last month, the EU scaled

back its refunds for exports destined for the SA market by 10% after complaints from Pretoria and the beef industry. A further 8% reduction from the subsidy was effected, following the reclassification of SA from zone 9 to zone 8 group of countries. Export subsidies for zone 9 nations — countries in southern Africa — are steeper than those applied in zone 8 — mostly west African countries — due to the distance from the EU.

The effect of decreasing the subsidies was to let producers foot part of their export bill, increasing the prices in the SA market.

The investigation was expected to take two more weeks.

In their defence on the time it took to launch the probe, EU officials said it had taken SA officials more than five months to provide support for their allegations.

If the allegations of dumping are substantiated by the commission's probe, it has a right to change the level of its subsidies to EU exports destined for the SA market without having to go through red tape applicable to other trade.

If not, SA may have to invoke antidumping procedures, trade observers point out.

Sources sympathetic to SA's case said the findings would be based on political considerations rather than pure economics.

SA has already received sympathy from the Dutch government, which is holding the EU's six-month rotating presidency. The Dutch have pledged to ensure consistency in the EU's development co-operation objectives and other policies pursued by Brussels.

The huge EU subsidies are known to be the main cause for the phenomenal rise in beef exports to SA — these surged to 47 000 tons last year from 1993's 7 000 tons.

# EU likely to seek elimination of tariffs on beef

Louise Cook

THE European Union (EU) was likely to seek the elimination of tariffs on beef in southern Africa, maintain its beef subsidies and possibly even tighten restrictions on meat from the region to its markets, European Research Office director Paul Goodison said yesterday.

Goodison said duty-free access for EU beef into southern Africa would seriously affect the region's producers and specialised meat processors, but would benefit consumers and traders.

Goodison's comments come amid efforts by the SA government to lobby the commission — the EU's executive — to rethink its subsidy policy on beef exports to SA.

00 10/4/97  
The commission said this week it had launched a probe into Pretoria's complaints of beef dumping after a supporting study was submitted to Brussels last week.

A preliminary study done for the agriculture department found that subsidies paid to EU exporters were creating unfair competition and "crushing" the beef industries in SA, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Namibia and Zimbabwe rely on the SA market for the bulk of their beef exports but heavily subsidised EU beef was flooding the domestic markets.

SA government and industry sources said yesterday the commission's recent concession to reclassify SA, providing some relief for the SA

beef industry against the negative impact of EU beef exports, did not go far enough in solving the problem.

Agriculture department deputy director for marketing Gerda van Dyk said government had already called for tenders for a follow-up report on the effect and extent of the problem.

But sources close to SA and the EU were sceptical that further concessions would be granted by Brussels.

Southern African Red Meat Producers' Forum chairman Gerhard Schutte said yesterday the EU export subsidies, which have been blamed for the jump in imported beef to 46 000 tons from 7 000 tons four years ago were "totally unacceptable" and called for a "complete reclassification" of SA.

③ BE MEAT

# Beef row: We've done enough, say Europeans

**3 MEAT**

**FOREIGN SERVICE**

Brussels - European Union officials claim they have done all that is needed to respond to concerns over European beef being dumped on the South African market.

ARG 12/4/97

The claims have been made by South African MPs, government officials and by neighbouring states such as Namibia. It has been alleged that the EU is depriving South African farmers and those from other Southern African Development Community states of a fair market because of the large volume of cheap beef which is being exported.

But Brussels agriculture spokesman Gerry Kiely said the European export subsidy had been cut, in stages, by 25 percent this year.

"We have a system inside the EU where prices are maintained at a high level, to guarantee farm incomes.

"We have taken full account of the criticisms and concerns which have been voiced by South Africa, and we believe that the cuts in subsidies go above and beyond what was needed to respond to the problem," he said.

Mr. Kiely denied there had been any dumping of beef at unrealistically low prices.

And he disputed claims that a reduction in EU exports would benefit farmers in South Africa or its neighbouring states. "It is likely that the meat would then come from somewhere else - such as the USA or Australia."



# Petition needed to probe meat charges

Wyndham Har Day

ES 29/4/97

CAPE TOWN — The Board of Tariffs and Trade would investigate the dumping of subsidised European meat on the SA market should a complaint be received from local red meat producers, Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin said at the weekend.

Despite some reductions in export refunds, the European meat is landing in SA at about half the price of the domestic product. Producers say the imports have serious implications for SA and other Southern African Development Community (SADC) meat producers, Namibia in particular.

National Party MP David Graaff asked Erwin in Parliament whether the trade and industry department was investigating the alleged dumping, which he said was "in violation of a decision made by the European Union (EU) Council of Ministers".

Erwin replied that the department was not investigating the issue but was aware that when the subsidised exports of beef from Europe increased dramatically the agriculture department had asked the European Commission to reclassify SA as a country which did not qualify for export refunds.

He said Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom had also written to the EU presidency in February pointing out the negative effects of the EU's export refunds on the regional beef industry.

Erwin explained that the board did conduct anti-dumping and countervailing investigations but that it would only be able to initiate an investigation if a petition was lodged from the meat industry. This petition should contain evidence of dumping.

Parliamentary committee on trade and industry chairman Rob Davies said there was an inherent contradiction in the EU paying export refunds to European meat producers while producing a negotiating mandate for a free-trade agreement with SA that excluded 40% of SA agricultural products.

He said that before the reductions were made in January and April the landed price of the EU beef was less than half of the domestic price.

He said there had been a previous occasion in West Africa when subsidised meat had been dumped with devastating effects on the domestic industry.

# Labour, feed costs make SA meat industry uncompetitive

Louise Cook

20/5/97

LABOUR and feed costs were the prime causes for SA's uncompetitive livestock industry, Animal Feed Manufacturers' Association director Louis Walters said at the weekend.

Reacting to a recent report on livestock production that found the sector was under threat from increased foreign competition, Walters said the association would now commission a value chain analysis of feed costs.

"We intend looking at every aspect, including milling, raw materials, rail-age, transport and on-farm costs to find the problem."

Farming consultancy Agrimark Trends warned in the report that, besides livestock production, animal feed production, feedlots as well as abattoirs would suffer from increased international competition.

"These sectors are highly dependent on domestic demand (for local meat

② MEAT

products) to maintain output levels as export potential is limited."

The report found expectations that cheap meat imports would result in lower consumer prices — by "forcing" more efficient livestock production, slash production costs and boost exports — had not materialised.

In fact, imports had had a negative effect on the various local livestock industries. This was "possibly" because productivity had not increased and profit margins had been maintained, the report said.

Agrimark Trends economist Ernst Janovski said SA maintained a 40% tariff on imported beef and mutton.

"This is well below the World Trade Organisation's requirements of between 69% and 160% for beef and between 66% and 190% for mutton," Janovski said.

Walters said the various sectors would meet in June to tackle the problems that faced the industry.

# Forum's constitution 'excluded minorities'

DD 23/5/97 (3) MEAT

**Louise Cook**

THE meat industry faced its first major hurdle in switching to a free market when National Agricultural Marketing Council head Eckard Kassier told the recently formed meat forum yesterday its constitution excluded minorities.

Kassier said the problem — in contradiction to new agricultural marketing leg-

islation — did not occur only in the meat industry. The council met in Pretoria to consider proposals on the future functioning of the meat industry, the fate of the Meat Board's R200m assets and the setting up of a nonprofit company to continue some of the functions handled by the board.

In January a newly formed meat forum, consisting of major industry roleplayers including feedlotters, traders and producers, proposed in its business plan that the board's assets be transferred to a trust and the proceeds of the trust be used to benefit the entire meat industry.

Kassier questioned the forum's constitution, pointing out that the Organisation for Livestock Producers — representing another group of producers — was not represented in the forum.

Council member Johan Wil-

lemse said the new marketing legislation required all affected groups be consulted. "It is expected of government to consult widely before implementing new policy — this applies to industries as well."

Forum chairman and SA Feedlot Association chief Dave Ford defended the constitution, saying it "in no way" excluded minorities or other groups. He said the proposed setting up of a nonprofit company did not mean roleplayers other than the proposed company could not benefit from the proceeds of a trust.

"The new act allowed little time for drawing up a business plan. We did what was possible for the sake of getting a business plan submitted on time; other parties can join at any time."

The meat traders warned that the whole marketing process could be scuppered if groups were allowed to join planning processes at all stages of the game.

## Anger at importation of Indian buffalo meat

The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) yesterday criticised the Department of Agriculture for having granted a permit for the importation of water buffalo meat from India.

It said such imports posed a risk to the local meat industry because India was experiencing serious problems with foot and mouth disease.

"It is clear that the Government has no sympathy with South Africa's red meat producers, and is actively working towards their destruction," RPO chairman Piet van Zyl said in a statement in Pretoria.

South Africa had recently been declared an area free of foot and mouth

disease, a status which Van Zyl said was jealously being guarded by the RPO. The decision to allow meat from India to enter the country was astounding and should be rescinded, he said.

Deputy director of animal health Johan Krige said in Pretoria the import permit was granted about a month ago, and the first consignment was already on its way.

The department had taken every possible precaution to ensure that such imports were free of foot and mouth disease, he added.

"If there had been any health risk we certainly would not have allowed these imports." - Sapa

Star 7/6/97

③ MEAT (SAP)

# Water buffalo meat imports anger farmers

## *Foot-and-mouth disease threat*

③ MEAT ~~2/11~~

ARG 7/6/97

**Grahamstown – An Indian meat processing plant has been authorised to export water-buffalo meat to South Africa, despite the South African Government declaring Indian abattoir conditions “not up to standard”.**

With India facing an epidemic of foot and mouth disease, which South Africa suffered last year, the decision has angered South Africa's red meat producers.

They say the move could jeopardise plans – which hinge on the sub-continent retaining its disease-free status – for a meat-producing “power bloc” of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

South Africa's Red Meat Producers Organisation (RMPO) reacted with shock and anger yesterday afternoon to the Department of Agriculture's decision to issue one import permit to Indian meat

processors, Ilana. Stressing that stringent hygiene and import criteria would apply, Agriculture department deputy director-general Chris Blignaut said today: “We were invited to India to inspect abattoirs and export facilities. They were not up to standard and we had to refuse permission to most of them to export water-buffalo meat to this country.”

“This is the normal procedure applied to all countries who export meat to South Africa.” But RMPO chairman Piet van Zyl said from Pretoria his organisation was astounded by the decision. South Africa had only recently been declared free of foot and mouth disease, he said.

Dr Van Zyl said: “Keeping the country free of the deadly disease is one of our primary concerns and it is general knowledge that India is experiencing serious problems with it.

“It is further ironic that the Southern African Meat Producers Liaison Forum, which regards this disease-free status as a top priority for the formation of a meat power bloc in the region, will meet shortly in Zimbabwe. The importation of meat from India will be high on the agenda and an angry reaction by producers is expected,” Dr Van Zyl added.

But Dr Blignaut said the awarding of the permit was not cut and dried.

“We certainly would not jeopardise animal health in this country and risk losing our foot and mouth-free status by allowing imports of meat where the disease is present,” he said.

“If India does not meet the stringent requirements for the exportation of meat, which are based on well-founded scientific research, then we may reconsider our decision,” said Dr Blignaut. – Ecna

EXPORTS

③ MEAT

### Abakor to sell ostrich meat to EU and Asia

CT(BR) 2517/97

Abakor, the meat processing company, said this week plans were well on track to slaughter about 100 000 ostriches a year for export to the European Union (EU) and the Far East.

An agreement with the Ostrich Feeders' Corporation has been concluded, Abakor said. This would allow for the facilities and training at the Pyramid abattoir outside Pretoria to be converted for specifically processing ostrich meat for export.

Fanie van Rensburg, the chairman of Abakor, said the development meant Pyramid abattoir would undertake new slaughtering from a source that it had never used before. "Besides providing excellent slaughter facilities to most of the ostrich farmers in the Transvaal, the abattoir will also create new job opportunities," he said. The EU had approved the Pyramid abattoir as a facility for the export of meat to Europe, Abakor said. — *Staff Reporter, Johannesburg*

Chairpersons of the three Residents' Committees that the rules would be finalised after the recess of August 1997.

- (2) The draft rules are presently being scrutinised by the residents. The adequacy of these rules will only be established once they have been implemented.
- (3) No complaints have been received during the specified period.

#### Guidelines for regulation of professions

\*23. Dr T G ALANT asked the Minister of Trade and Industry:†

Whether the Government has considered the guidelines for the regulation of professions, as proposed by the Competition Board; if not, why not; if so, what is the policy of the Government in this regard? N1584E

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY:

The Government is aware of, but has not given specific detailed attention to, the Competition Board's Guidelines for the Regulation of Professional Services.

The reason for this is that the Government is currently engaged in the formulation of a wide range of policies and has not had the time to make a comprehensive assessment of the guidelines.

#### Importation of water buffalo meat from India

\*24. Dr E A SCHOEMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs:†

- (1) Whether any permits for the importation of water buffalo meat from India have recently been issued by the Department of Agriculture; if so, how many;
- (2) whether foot and mouth disease is endemic in India; if so, what precautionary measures are being taken to prevent the disease from spreading in South Africa? N1585E

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND LAND AFFAIRS:

- (1) Yes, permits have been issued. To date permits

for 29 containers (of 16 metric tons each) have been issued.

- (2) Technically, foot and mouth disease is endemic in India. Some of the Northern provinces have, however, been free of the disease for more than three years.

We are importing deboned meat only — in accordance with international guidelines for the maintenance of our FMD free status. Buffalo are sourced from an area certified free from FMD for at least six months. In addition, animals are subjected to rigorous ante and post mortal inspections for lesions of FMD and the deboned meat has to meet with specific pH requirements as an added safeguard. Dr Schoeman may rest assured that nothing will be done to jeopardize our hard-earned FMD free status.

#### Government-owned buildings: asbestos part of construction material

\*25. Mr P F SMITH asked the Minister of Public Works:

- (1) Whether there are any government-owned buildings that are being used as work-places or residences in which asbestos in any form is part of the construction material; if so,
- (2) whether he or his Department has undertaken or commissioned any investigation into the health hazards to persons using such buildings; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether information on this issue is being made public; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether he will make a statement on the matter? N1586E

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS:

- (1) In view of the past extensive use of a variety of asbestos products which includes plaster, lagging of pipes, water piping, ceiling and roofing materials, etc., there are undoubtedly Government-owned buildings used as work-places in which asbestos products, in some or

other form, have been used in their construction.

- (2) The National Department of Public Works has adopted the policy of eradicating all harmful asbestos products from buildings under its control. These potentially harmful asbestos products are being systematically identified in the course of normal repairs and renovations that are being conducted to all buildings as an on-going process.
- (3) The adoption of the policy to eradicate potentially harmful asbestos products from buildings under its control has not at this stage been publicly launched by the Department of Public Works. As a result the Department has not publicly announced which specific buildings with potentially harmful asbestos products, are being attended to at present. There is, however, no objection against publicly naming those buildings which are presently being attended to by the Department in this regard.

- The most critical building complex involved is the Pomfret Military Base, which is an old asbestos mining village that was taken over and allocated to the Department of Defence during 1990. The outcome of a comprehensive investigation into the potentially harmful effects which asbestos pollution, emanating from past mining activities which were conducted at the redundant asbestos mine, has on the adjoining residential village now utilised by the Department of Defence, is nearing completion. The possibility of the entire military base being abandoned as a result of the potentially harmful effects of asbestos pollution, cannot be discounted at this stage.

- Asbestos lagging of water piping at the Agricultural Building, Pretoria, is in the process of being removed as part of the renovation of the building. This aspect is being given priority attention at present.
- In the early nineties, asbestos based plaster which was used for acoustical purposes in the Assembly Hall of the old Parliament Building in Cape Town, was removed and replaced with a modern non-toxic material.

- The lagging to the water piping of the central heating system of the Central Government Offices is in the process of being replaced.

It can be mentioned that the removal of potentially harmful asbestos products from a building is highly specialised and only those firms which can comply with stringent international guidelines for dealing with such a problem, are employed.

- (4) It is felt that a statement in regard to the Department's views on asbestos pollution and the policy that it has adopted will be advantageous. The Department should publicise its concern for the welfare of employees of the State who are compelled to utilise State-owned buildings, particularly with regard to the Pomfret Military Base. Should you concur then an announcement document in this regard can be compiled. Recently much publicity was given to asbestos pollution at old asbestos mines in the Northern Cape, which also resulted in Transnet looking at the use of specialised containers to prevent asbestos pollution along the rail routes to the export harbours for asbestos. Severe asbestos pollution was also discovered at the marshalling yards in the relevant export harbours and subsequently cleared by Transnet.

It is considered correct that the Department, in collaboration with the Department of Defence, makes a public statement regarding Pomfret before the press gets to hear about the potential problem from another source.

\*26. Mr W A HOFMEYR - Public Works. [Question standing over.]

\*27. Mr W A HOFMEYR - Environmental Affairs and Tourism. [Question standing over.]

#### Upgrading/repair of Lekkerwater

\*28. Ms F I CHOCHAN-KHOTA asked the Minister of Finance:

Whether the Department of State Expenditure was approached for approving a donation by a certain foundation, the name of which has been furnished to his Department for the purpose of his reply, for the upgrading and

# Meat Board members suspended by minister

**OWN CORRESPONDENT**

PRETORIA: Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister Mr Derek Hanekom has suspended board members of the Meat Board with immediate effect, replacing them with an interim board.

Hanekom said the suspension of about 15 board members followed many complaints by meat organisations, including the Red Meat Forum and Meat Traders, about the deregulation of the industry.

After consultation with the board members and the complainants, and on the advice of the Marketing Council, it was deemed fit to suspend the board members

**3 MEAT**

and phase out the Meat Board, Hanekom said yesterday.

The suspension, he added, had nothing to do with fraud or irregularities, but was mainly due to policy differences.

This should not be seen as a reflection on their personal integrity, he said, adding that the position of other employees of the Meat Board remained unchanged.

The Meat Board, together with all the existing agricultural marketing boards, would have to be phased out by January 5, 1998.

Hanekom said the Marketing Council, established under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act of 1996, was to oversee the phasing out.

CT 7/8/97



# Meat Board axed over deregulation

**Stephané Bothma  
and Nicola Jenvey**

PRETORIA — Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom suspended the 13 members of the Meat Board yesterday, citing dissatisfaction with the management of the deregulation of the meat industry.

A new 10-member board was appointed to serve until the meat scheme is revoked or until January 5 next year.

The agriculture department said: "Because of problems with the way the process of phasing out ... agricultural marketing boards has been handled in the meat industry, in particular with respect to the utilisation of assets, the minister has been advised to suspend

(2) MEAT  
the members. Those who had expressed "dissatisfaction" included the Red Meat Forum and Meat Traders' Association.

Suspended Meat Board chairman Frikkie Botha said a lack of consensus among members had brought the deregulation process to a standstill. A delegation before the National Agricultural Marketing Council last week had requested that a transformation committee be established to bring the deregulation "back on track".

Botha said he was relieved the deregulation process would move forward. Hanekom's letter of suspension had indicated that the move was not a reflection on the members, but rather a way in which to speed up the process.

BD 7/8/97  
In terms of recommendations by the National Agricultural Marketing Council, all marketing boards will have to be phased out by January 5. Hanekom is responsible for overseeing the orderly phasing out of the boards.

"We are running out of time," he said. "We only have a few months to ensure that new procedures are in place to manage the interests of the meat industry."

The department said the circumstances of Meat Board employees would not be affected by the move.

The new members are Geoff Leach, Danie Claassen, Daan Opperman, SMK Seape, P de Klerk, Les Kugel, Sandi Mgidlana, Tim Davidson and Sally Motlana.

## 'Severance packages behind sacking'

Louise Cook

③ MEAT

ED 12/8/97

SHARP differences over severance packages for Meat Board personnel had been one of the main issues behind Land and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom's sacking last week of 13 board members, sources said yesterday.

A source said rumours about huge salary increases and severance packages for the board's staff was a major cause of a rift between the National Agricultural Marketing Council and members of the

previous board chaired by Frikkie Bester.

The council headed up by Eckart Kassier was responsible for overseeing de-regulation in the agricultural sector and had recommended to Hanekom that a new board be appointed.

Details of the proposed severance packages were not known, but the source said the sacked board had applied the "wrong" guidelines on severance packages in negotiations with staff members. Council member Eugene Brock confirmed severance packages had been an issue.

## Pork producers fear new body will reimpose statutory levies

Louise Cook

BP27/8/97 (3) MEAT

KWAZULU-Natal farmers threatened to scupper future plans for the SA pork industry when they initially refused to support membership of a new non-profit company to take over from the Meat Board at the South African Pork Producers' Organisation (Sappo) congress in Johannesburg yesterday.

The farmers were concerned that the new company would impose statutory levies on pork producers in the same way the agricultural control boards of the past had done. They claimed the company threatened to bring unnecessary regulation to the industry.

KwaZulu-Natal delegate Dave Whyte said there was no clarity on the services the non-profit company planned to provide to the industry, or its costs.

But SA Agricultural Union marketing and trade director Hans van der Merwe said there was undue fear of new levies being imposed. New agricultural marketing legislation set a range of conditions to be fulfilled before Parliament could agree to new levies being set, he said.

The congress finally agreed that Sappo should join the new company, but that its membership be reconsidered if new levies were to be imposed.

# Beef may get a boost if chicken price rises

8 Jan 22/9/97

③ MEAT

By SHIRLEY WOODGATE

A hefty increase in the price of chicken could see succulent steaks back in fashion on South African menus.

Commenting on a possible 30% increase in the price of chicken following a decision by the Board of Tariffs and Trade last week to impose a tariff of R2,20/kg on imported chickens, Meat Board agricultural economist Wilbie Venter said the move could have a stabilising effect on the cost of red meat because price increases in one type of meat generally meant a shift to another.

"Consumers are led by the lower price in a specific protein food, which means a decrease in the amount of white meat coming into the country would probably lead

to a drop in red meat prices, as the rate of decline in the real price would slow down.

"This would effectively continue the decline in the trend which has been evident in the declining producer price of beef and pork since the 1980s," he said.

Stressing that the end price of a specific commodity was determined by many factors, Venter said that in the case of red meat, added to a possible increase in the cost of poultry would be the amount of spending money available to consumers.

"Drought is another factor, but since all previous El Nino phenomena have not automatically triggered a drought in SA, the extent of the problems which this specific El Nino will cause are yet to be proved," he said.

# New company to take over from Meat Board

③ MEAT 3/10/97

## *Maitland abattoir set for change*

**ANDREA WEISS**  
CITY EDITOR AND SAPA

**A non-profit company is set to take over the functions of the Meat Board at the Maitland abattoir.**

The board's functions, which include classification of carcasses, grading of hides and skins, the auction system and the running of the offal pool, are due to terminate on November 30.

The chairman of the interim advisory committee, Kent Morkel, said the new company would have to work in the interests of livestock producers, agents, buyers and the public.

An advisory committee has been formed to thrash out details of the proposed company.

Mr Morkel said the objective was

to work out a system which would attract more producers to the abattoir and to provide good, healthy meat that had been properly inspected and which could be sold at reasonable prices.

A formal proposal on the new company, which will include representation by trade unions and consumer organisations, is to be put to the metropolitan council for approval by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, figures released by the Cape Metropolitan Council show the Epping market posted a 16% rise in sales in July compared with the equivalent month last year, bringing in an additional R4,6-million.

Potatoes and vegetables accounted for R2,8-million of the total and this has been attributed to higher prices obtained for these basic items by the

agents, the council, which now owns and manages the market, said in a statement.

Revenue increased by 53% as a result of the improvement in turnover and resultant increased market dues and an increase in tariffs.

The market sold 12 004 tons of potatoes, 2 370 tons of tomatoes, and 2 390 tons of cabbages during July.

Almost 4 000 tons of other vegetables, 2 360 tons of bananas, 2 766 tons of citrus and 1 557 tons of subtropical fruit were also sold in July, as part of a throughput of 33 372,75 tons of fresh produce.

"This is a substantial volume of fresh fruit and vegetables," Achmat Ebrahim, the executive director of the council's directorate of protection, health and trading services, said.

# Keep mutton import duty, plead farmers

CT (DR) 9/12/97

③ MEAT

**RAVIN MAHARAJ**

Durban — The troubled red meat industry has written to Derek Hanekom, the minister of agriculture, asking him not to consider lowering the import duty on mutton, as this would have a detrimental effect on South African wool production and lead to the dumping of mutton.

Industry leaders said yesterday the Red Meat Producers' Organisation and other producer

organisations had sent a letter to Hanekom late last week following moves by the Australian red meat industry to lower the ad valorem duty on mutton, which at present is 40 percent.

They said any move to lower the import duty on mutton would have a negative impact on the mutton and wool industry.

Industry leaders said the wool industry was one of South Africa's largest agricultural export industries.

"A substantial part of South Africa's mutton production comes from the country's wool producers. Any reduction in import duties on mutton will also have a detrimental effect on wool production in South Africa."

Furthermore, they said, the South African wool industry had scaled down so severely that it "has almost reached the point where it will no longer be possible to be an important role player in the world wool market.

"Any import tariff reduction may cause the wool industry to reach the crucial point, where it will no longer be possible to play an important role in the international wool market."

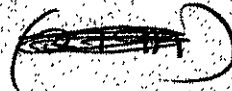
They said the weakening of the Australian dollar against the rand was also of concern. The income that the Australian producers generated with the export of mutton to South Africa did not justify any reduction in the import duty, they said.

CT. 12/12/97

## SA NEWS DIGEST

RED MEAT

B MEAT



### Producers call for uniform carcass description system for SADC states

The Federation of Red Meat Producers of South Africa had asked the government for the immediate implementation of a uniform carcass description system for the 12 member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), industry leaders said this week.

In a letter to Derek Hanekom, the minister of agriculture, the federation said it was convinced the current South African classification system discriminated against extensive producers and was out of line with international standards. "The red meat industry is presently totally deregulated while the current classification system stems from the regulated era, and does not comply with the requirements of a deregulated market," it said.

According to the current system, only animals who have not shed their teeth qualify for the A grade. Voicing their discontent with this system, industry leaders said that within the European Union carcasses of two- and four-teeth animals were included in the best grades.

The system was therefore out of line with international standards. — *Ravin Maharaj, Durban.*

LIVESTOCK *Increasing losses threaten farmers*

# Stock theft skins meat and wool

③ MEAT

CT (PDR) 15/12/97

RAVIN MAHARAJ

Durban — A dramatic increase in stock theft was costing South Africa's red meat and wool industry millions of rands, and was influencing industry investment in the region, industry leaders and the South African Police Service (SAPS) warned yesterday.

They also cautioned that any increase in stock theft, which they believed was the work of cross-border syndicates, would put the small livestock industry out of business; and derail industry moves to seek access to new livestock markets.

In the past year, stock theft alone has cost the red meat and wool industry in KwaZulu Natal about R58 million, more than R60 million in the Eastern Cape, and similar amounts in the Free State and Mpumalanga.

Between January and June this year, a total of 21 198 cases of stock theft were reported, compared with 20 835 last year.

Of those, 5 716 cases were reported in the Eastern Cape, 4 314 in KwaZulu Natal, 3 100 in the Free State and 2 364 in Mpumalanga, the SAPS said.

In KwaZulu Natal 24 546 cattle, valued at R36,8 million, and 12 553 sheep and goats, valued at R3,1 million, were stolen between January and November this year. In Lesotho, 1 120 cattle and 252 sheep and goats were stolen this year.

Aggrey Mahanjana, a spokesman for the South African Federation of Red Meat Producers, said "many small livestock producers, especially in the Eastern Cape,

want to shut down their businesses. This will destroy the country's mutton and wool industry," he said.

"Stock theft has resulted in drastic structural adjustments in the livestock industry, and the smaller producers are easy targets. We cannot allow this dangerous state of affairs to dash investor confidence any longer, and affect the industry's recovery process," Mahanjana said.

Gosie Oosthuizen, the commander of the Pretoria-based stock theft unit, said the theft of cattle, sheep, goats and poultry was becoming a "common phenomenon" in KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Free State. There were also problems at border points between Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland.

"Although there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that criminal syndicates are involved, the stock theft team is working on several leads to try and crack down on criminals," Oosthuizen said.

Mike Appelfgryn, the co-ordinator of the stock theft unit in KwaZulu Natal, said his 225-member team was working "flat out" in finding solutions to many problems, including difficulties in identifying stock, and inauthentic documentation, which often landed in the hands of officials.

"But the major problem is that there is no system of compulsory branding of livestock in KwaZulu Natal. The Red Meat Producers' Organisation has asked the provincial government why this is not in place. Compulsory branding will have to be put into place if the problem is to be alleviated," he said.



AGRICULTURE - (3 MEAT)

1998

Underpaid vets emigrating in droves, supplies of critical serums

running out

# Disease crisis

threatens

# meat and milk

supply

Star 3/1/98 (3 meat)

By PAUL OLIVIER

Milk shortages and higher prices for dairy products, beef, mutton and pork could occur later this year because vaccines urgently needed to combat several severe livestock diseases are fast running out.

Sicknesses similar to the devastating bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, or "mad cow disease") in Britain could decimate southern African livestock herds.

Commercial livestock herds, as well as those of subsistence farmers, would be affected in a looming disaster for an agricultural industry already facing hard times through the El Niño-fueled drought. In addition, tens of thousands of horses could be vulnerable to the debilitating African horse sickness.

Poor salaries have seen South Africa's top veterinary scientists leaving the country in droves to take up lucrative positions overseas, leaving the Onderstepoort vaccine facility outside Pretoria critically understaffed and unable to meet demand.

The shortage of vaccines could play havoc with livestock throughout the region, and many farmers could face financial ruin if they do not get vaccines in time to protect animals against killer diseases.

Dr Daan Goosen, marketing manager of biological products at the Onderstepoort Research Centre, told the *Saturday Star* that southern Africa was facing a potentially crippling situation.

The situation is exacerbated by the resignation of the majority of Onderstepoort's top veterinary vaccine specialists, many of whom have left the country. Only one of a team of six skilled scientists originally working there remains at the laboratory.

Veterinarians ordering vaccine for bovine ephemeral fever became aware only recently of the critical situation at Onderstepoort when they had cheques returned and were told that supplies had run out. The shortage of vaccine for bovine ephemeral fever places the dairy and beef industries under severe threat and could lead to a shortage of milk.

## Facing ruin

Cattle breeders across the subcontinent could face ruin if there is an outbreak of the disease. Bovine ephemeral fever causes fever and inflammatory reactions in the muscles of cattle and can lead to total milk loss in cows during the lactation period. In bulls it causes infertility that could last for up to six months.

Veterinary experts in Namibia have also warned against an expected outbreak of lumpy skin disease in cattle in several Southern African Development Community countries - another sickness for which vaccine stocks at Onderstepoort are critically low.

Other endemic diseases that could flourish amid the shortage of vaccines, and which could cripple agriculture in southern Africa, are heart water disease and gall sickness among cattle.

Vaccine supplies for foot-and-mouth and lung disease among cattle are also fast running out.

Sheep contracting blue tongue disease, Rift Valley fever or Wesselsbron disease, and horses that contract African horse sickness, would remain under threat for years to come, Goosen said.

Another problem is that some viruses which cause diseases mutate and become more resistant. New vaccines then have to be developed to combat the new strain of viruses. With the lack of staff, this has virtually become an impossible task.

Onderstepoort, once the pearl of veterinary research in Africa and one of the best of its kind in the world, is currently critically understaffed. Top scientists are paid as little as R60 000 a year.



Da

FEELING BUBBLY: With a clink of their champagne glasses, Marius van Rooij rose over an overcast Johannesburg skyline on Thursday.



Some of their former colleagues are reportedly pulling in up to R800 000 annually overseas. But it is not only Onderstepoort which is having severe staff problems. Of 240 state veterinary positions in South Africa, only 112 are filled.

According to a recent report, the crisis could have severe repercussions if the situation became known abroad. South Africa's capability of mounting an effective official veterinary front would be seriously questioned by the international community.

The report was presented to the national director of veterinary public health, Gideon Brickner, and the director of the National Directorate of National Animal Health, Emily Mogaahne. Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs Derek Hanekom, who is on leave, could not be contacted.

Star 3/1/98

# No vaccine threat say food producers

~~DAIRY~~ MEAT

## 'Unaware of shortage'

**EDWARD WEST**  
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

**Leading South African agricultural livestock companies have played down the risk of a looming shortage of vaccines following weekend reports that the Onderstepoort research institute was running out.**

The Onderstepoort institute near Pretoria warned in a report in Saturday Argus that Southern Africa faced a potentially crippling situation, particularly in the dairy and beef industries, due to shortages of some livestock vaccines.

The shortages were exac-

erbated by the resignation of most of the institute's vaccine specialists who had left Onderstepoort for better paid jobs abroad.

A shortage of vaccines such as bovine ephemeral fever could lead to a severe shortage of milk. Cattle breeders, not only in South Africa but in neighbouring countries, could face ruin, the reports said.

But Dr Tinus Prinsloo, manager of Foodcorp's pig-gery and livestock operation, Kanhym Estate, said he was not aware there was a shortage of vaccines. The company kept vaccine in stock, as did the vaccine distribution company, which meant Kanhym

would be well supplied for some time to come.

Many vaccines were imported, he said, but some, such as for the indigenous bovine ephemeral fever which occurred in cattle, were produced in South Africa.

Rainbow Chicken chairman Dave Marlow said the company had never experienced problems obtaining vaccines, and he was not aware of any problem elsewhere in the broiler industry.

Managing director of Western Cape-based dairy group Bonnita said that as far as he knew the group was not having any problems obtaining vaccines.

# Farmers, vets warn of looming vaccine crisis

AGG 10/11/98  
*'Livestock industry at risk'*

PAUL OLIVIER

Farmers, veterinary surgeons and distributors of animal vaccines have urgently called on the Government to find a solution to the critical shortage of vaccines threatening to cripple the livestock industry in Southern Africa.

But, despite widespread concern about the shortage, Minister of Agriculture Derek Hanekom maintains in a written answer to numerous questions put to him: "I would like to further reiterate that there is no crisis at Onderstepoort Biological Products."

However, desperate veterinarian experts at Onderstepoort, Southern Africa's prime veterinary research centre, told Saturday Argus that it was no longer possible to "pro-actively" fight many diseases as most of the country's top vaccine development specialists had left the country for better paying positions at comparable institutions overseas.

Onderstepoort experts said the loss of some of South Africa's top scientists at Onderstepoort had "seriously hurt our capacity" and that was why there were not enough vaccines available.

"Since 1995 vaccine production in South Africa has virtually crumbled and the last person trained at Onderstepoort was in 1992. He has since resigned," said Hans Jaeger, chief of research, development and quality control at Onderstepoort, and the only vaccine specialist left at the research centre.

"We are indeed in a crisis and if something is not done soon to alleviate the situation, it will be a sad day for livestock farming in Southern Africa," Dr Jaeger said.

But it is not only scientists who have left for greener pastures. In 1995, 64 of the 76 veterinary graduates in South Africa left for overseas and last year 90% of all graduates opted for better paying jobs in other countries.

Since February last year 112, or 46%, of the 240 state veterinary posts became vacant and at Onderstepoort only 62,5% of all

veterinary posts were filled.

Top scientists' salaries in South Africa are as low as R60 000 a year, while veterinary surgeons who have left the country earn up to R800 000 in Britain, Canada and the United States.

The critical shortage of vaccines - to fight a host of potentially killer diseases in livestock in Southern Africa - was highlighted by Saturday Argus last

week as farmers, veterinary surgeons and distributors of vaccines warned that the supply of vaccine for certain livestock diseases had virtually run out. Shocking figures revealed that in some cases there were up to 48 505 outstanding orders for urgently needed vaccines. Some of the orders date back two years.

Farmers, veterinarians and distributors of animal vaccines said they were "starting to wonder if it was worth putting in orders at all" and that Southern Africa "was heading for a potential agricultural disaster" unless the situation was resolved soon.

Devastating diseases endemic to Africa such as African Swine Fever, Rinderpest, Blue Tongue, Heartwater, Rift Valley Fever, Lumpy Skin Disease, Horse Sickness and certain

strains of Red water, Anaplasmosis and Ephemeral Fever are set to flourish and could wreak havoc in the entire livestock industry in Southern Africa.

"The position for Southern Africa is very critical. The buck stops with the minister of agriculture and he needs to fully investigate the true situation today," said former President of the Zimbabwe Veterinary Association - and past chairman of the Mpumalanga Branch of the SA Veterinary Association, now a vaccine distributor - Les

Orsmond of Central Vet in Mid-delburg, Mpumalanga.

"If - in the opinion of foreign countries especially the EEC - South Africa arrives at a situation where there is inadequate monitoring of diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease, then we can say goodbye to most of our agricultural exports," Dr Orsmond warned.

The huge shortage of vaccines to combat killer diseases

was disclosed by Onderstepoort Marketing Manager of Biological Products Daan Goosen last week after farmers com-

plained that it was becoming impossible to obtain vaccines for Ephemeral Fever and Lumpy Skin Disease.

Said a despondent Hein Odendaal of the farm Riverton in Cedarville, Natal: "We had a huge outbreak of Ephemeral Fever during the 1997 season. Some of our beef cattle vaccinated with vaccine obtained from Onderstepoort still contracted the disease, so it would seem that the vaccine was only 50% effective.

"It has now also become impossible to get vaccine for Lumpy Skin Disease which could decimate our sheep flocks and we are finding ourselves in a desperate situation," Mr Odendaal said.

In spite of trying to downplay the crises, Mr Hanekom did say that the Onder-

stepoort research centre was being restructured as part of the Government's programme of restructuring state assets.

"Further capital will be injected into the enterprise to help expand its potential markets, to bring in new technology and expertise and to enhance its efficiency.

"The process is well advanced and further details

will be announced as soon as they are finalised.

"Onderstepoort remains a centre of excellence of considerable international standing and I expect that through this process of restructuring its significance, locally and internationally, will increase," Mr Hanekom said.

However, in a recent report to the Director of Animal Health at the Department of Agriculture, Emily Mogajane, Onderstepoort scientists warned that South Africa had a serious shortage of viral-disease specialists in veterinary facilities and the facility would therefore be unable to train new vaccine specialist to meet international standards - "even if suitable trainees could be found".

The report goes on to say that if the situation became widely known, South Africa's ability to fight animal diseases would be seriously questioned by the international community.

"Since at present there are no courses that could adequately train animal viral-disease specialists in South Africa, it follows that international assistance in this direction will be needed. One possibility that could be considered is the funding of two or three young veterinarians, with good academic records, to undertake PhD programmes at suitable institutions in Europe and North America.

"It is also necessary that South Africa, or perhaps the Southern African developing countries as a region, collectively begin to build their capability in this sort of training.

"The solution may be the formation of some umbrella body that enables closer collaboration between existing organisations to achieve the desired end. Alternatively, the veterinary facilities could be enabled to acquire additional teaching capacity from a variety of sources as and when it is needed," the report states.

Dr Goosen said that good quality Ephemeral Fever vaccine had now become available.

However, it would take up to ten days to distribute supplies and by the time farmers had vaccinated their cattle, the epidemic could be in an advanced stage.

**Top scientists here earn R60 000... overseas, a vet can earn R800 000 a year**

**...we can say goodbye to most of our agricultural exports**

# Backlog of 48 000 vaccine orders as understaffed Onderstepoort struggles on

Onderstepoort Biological Products has fallen so far behind production schedules that it has clocked up a staggering backlog of 48 000 orders for animal vaccines – and some farmers have now been waiting for supplies for two years.

This emerged as farmers, veterinary surgeons and distributors of animal vaccines this week urgently called on the Government to resolve the critical shortage of vaccines threatening to cripple the livestock industry in southern Africa.

Agricultural industry officials have warned that animal exports could be banned by the European Union soon, unless there is an immediate

move to reinstate “proactive” control of killer diseases.

The huge shortage of vaccines was disclosed by Onderstepoort marketing manager of biological products Dr Daan Goosen this month after farmers complained it was becoming impossible to obtain vaccines.

They face financial disaster if they fail to protect their animals from the ravages of diseases ranging from foot-and-mouth to lumpy-skin disease.

Hein Odendaal of Cedarville, KwaZulu Natal, said: “We had a huge outbreak of ephemeral fever during the 1997 season. Some of our beef cattle injected with vaccine obtained

from Onderstepoort still contracted the disease, so it would seem the vaccine was only 50% effective.

“It has now also become impossible to get vaccine for lumpy skin disease, which could decimate our sheep flocks, and we are finding ourselves in a desperate situation.”

Vaccine distributor Les Orsmond, of Central Vet in Mpumalanga, said: “The position for southern Africa is very critical. The buck stops with the minister of agriculture, and he needs to fully investigate the true situation.

“If, in the opinion of foreign countries, especially the European Union, South Africa arrives at a situation where there is inadequate monitor-

ing of these diseases, then we can say good-bye to most of our agricultural exports,” he warned.

Desperate veterinarian experts at Onderstepoort, southern Africa’s prime veterinary research centre and a major supplier to farmers, have told the *Saturday Star* that it is no longer possible to “proactively” fight many of the diseases.

Many of the country’s top vaccine development specialists have left the country for better-paying positions at comparable institutions overseas, and this is a major factor behind the shortage of vaccines.

“Since 1995, vaccine production in South Africa has virtually crum-

bled and the last person was trained at Onderstepoort in 1992. He has since resigned,” said Hans Jaeger, chief of research and quality control at Onderstepoort. He is the only vaccine specialist left at the centre.

“We are in a crisis, and if something is not done soon to alleviate the situation, it will be a sad day for livestock farming in southern Africa.”

However, Minister of Agriculture Derek Hanekom denied there was a crisis at Onderstepoort Biological Products, but said moves were afoot to inject capital into the enterprise to help expand potential markets and at the same time bring in new technology and expertise.

Star 10/1/98

SMERT BARK

Farmers were merely warned of a possible shortage while new vaccine was being developed, says minister

# 'No shortages at Onderstepoort'

Stm 17/1/98

3 MEAT

3 MEAT

The *Saturday Star* has recently run a number of articles about an alleged vaccine shortage at Onderstepoort Biological Products which, says Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister **DEREK HANEKOM**, 'misrepresent and sensationalise the issues and create the false impression of a crisis where there is none'. This is Hanekom's response to the articles

Firstly, there is no shortage of vaccines for economically important animal diseases as implied by Paul Olivier in his articles of January 3 and 10. And, contrary to the allegations in the article, Onderstepoort remains a centre of excellence of considerable international standing.

The real story, as given to Olivier by Dr Goosen and Dr Jaeger of the OBP, and supported by the director of the OBP, Johan Broekman, is much simpler and much less sensational

than your articles imply.

On November 17 last year the OBP released a press statement informing consumers of OBP products that the OBP were developing a new vaccine for bovine ephemeral fever. The existing vaccine was proving to have a limited effect as there were reported cases of animals showing clinical manifestations of the disease.

As vaccine production is a biological growth process and can take from eight to 12 weeks to produce and test, OBP management believed it was necessary to forewarn consumers of a possible shortage of stock and inform them of alternative controls and preventive measures that could be applied until the first 148 000 doses of the new vaccine were ready for distribution on January 2.

Vaccines are a preventive form of disease control and as such should be used for the maintenance of the good health of livestock, and not when there is an outbreak of disease. Thus a

temporary shortage of vaccine stock does not represent a 'major threat to SA farmers', particularly if farmers follow alternative control suggestions and vaccinate their livestock regularly.

The OBP produces 125 million doses of 52 different vaccines every year and it stores several million doses of vaccines for strategic diseases, should there be an outbreak.

In other words, vaccines are available for "devastating diseases such as rinderpest, blue tongue, heartwater, Rift Valley fever, lumpy skin disease, horse sickness and certain strains of redwater, anaplasmosis and ephemeral fever". It is simply not true to say that these diseases "are set to flourish".

Finally, Onderstepoort is being proactively restructured as part of the Government's programme of restructuring of state assets. This process was not initiated because a crisis existed, but because a capital injection will enable the institution to

expand and develop its markets, expertise and technology, and improve its efficiency, to the greater benefit of South Africa's agricultural economy.

Furthermore, Olivier's assertion that "five out of six vaccine specialists have resigned ... and left the country for better paying jobs" is false, as four of the posts are newly established and have never been filled.

While it has been difficult to fill the one vacant specialist post because newly qualified veterinarians prefer to go into more lucrative private practices, this problem has existed since the 1980s and will be dealt with by the Public Service Commission's new job evaluation system.

Scheduled to be implemented on April 1, this system will authorise government departments to review the salaries of various occupational groups, in order to bring salaries in line with the private sector where necessary.

We appreciate your interest in covering agricultural issues

and we are committed to transparency and the right of the public to information on issues facing the sector, but the effect on the industry of such sensationalist and ill-considered journalism is considerable, and benefits neither the press, the public nor our new democratic government.

Olivier himself points to the potentially devastating effects of a boycott of South African animal products by the export market, yet he himself is the sole reason for bringing into question the monitoring and maintenance of the health of South Africa's livestock.

In his second article he claimed that the entire industry - from farmers to veterinary surgeons to distributors - have called on the Government to find a solution to "a critical shortage of vaccines threatening to cripple the livestock industry in South Africa".

Apart from OBP officials - who insist they were misrepresented by Olivier - the only sources named in the second

article are a distributor in Mpumalanga who claims to have 48 000 orders outstanding (while OBP records show 150 orders outstanding over the past two months), and one farmer in KwaZulu Natal who doesn't know that lumpy skin disease is a cattle disease and his sheep flock are safe from it.

To claim that this paltry sample represents "farmers, veterinary surgeons and distributors of animal vaccines" is rather fanciful. And whatever happened to double-checking one's sources?

In addition, Olivier ignored a press release from the director-general of the Department of Agriculture clarifying the inaccuracies in his first report.

This approach may sell newspapers during the December silly season but it is highly irresponsible and shoddy journalism.

The only crisis that exists is the crisis that Olivier has caused through his irresponsible journalism.

# Defunct Meat Board to take over Abakor

Louise Cook

BB 6/2/98

MEAT

LIVESTOCK farmers, consumers and other stakeholders in the now defunct Meat Board are set to acquire a 50% stake in loss-making Abakor, the state-controlled abattoir company.

The shareholding in Abakor will come about as a result of the Meat Board restructuring the R55m owed to it by Abakor. The debt stems from Abakor's purchase a few years ago of an offal company and deboning plant from the board.

The board was dissolved last year, and a liquidation committee is collecting outstanding debt.

Land and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom is reportedly keen to extend the lifespan of the executive committee of the Meat Board, with the aim for the committee to take over, or co-manage, Abakor and guide it to privatisation.

On the committee are Agricultural Marketing Council member Danie Claassen, Meat Board vice-chairman Tim Davidson, specialist Les Kugel and beef producer Pieter de Klerk.

Claassen, who is responsible for overseeing the board's liquidation, said: "Abakor is too vital for the emerging farming sector to allow it to be lost to the country."

He said Abakor "has absolutely no cash flow left" but would not divulge the extent of its financial woes. Government was looking at injecting some money into the corporation to revitalise operations. The amount under consideration was not known.

Hanekom reportedly held a special meeting with stakeholders in Cape



HANEKOM

Town last night to thrash out details of the debt-for-equity swap.

Abakor owns 10 abattoirs and has been operating below capacity for a number of years owing to insufficient carcasses passing through the slaughterhouses. At one stage producers in Natal applied to government to bring in live sheep from Australia to boost turnover at Cato Ridge, but the request was turned down on grounds of animal health considerations.

Indications are that the swap is motivated by the need to wind up the assets of the Meat Board and to restructure Abakor to serve the emerging livestock farming sector.

## Trade unions meet to plot strategy against Rio Tinto

Rene Grawitzky

BB 6/2/98

TRADE unionists from 12 countries gather in Johannesburg this weekend to adopt a strategy to challenge the industrial relations policies of Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining company.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said that the company could face international pressure due to allegations of human rights abuses and union-bashing.

Rio Tinto has called such allegations "sweeping and ill informed".

The conference, hosted by the NUM but organised by the 28-million strong International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, is intended to create an international network of all unions dealing with Rio Tinto.

NUM international secretary Siphon Ndebele said the union's participation stemmed from its involvement with Rio Tinto subsidiaries in SA, including Richards Bay Minerals and Palabora Mining Company.

The network would facilitate a regular exchange of information between unions on company strategy, collective bargaining and other matters.

The international union federation accused the company of union-bashing and anti-union practices.

The international campaign would also attempt to put pressure on the company to recognise union rights and adhere to minimum social, and health and safety standards.

Rio Tinto's London spokesman, Peter Darling, said the conference was an attempt by Australian trade unions to bring their grievances against the company into the international arena.

They were raising issues such as human rights violations, poor environmental performance and anti-union attitudes, "when in fact the whole issue is our desire to bring work practices in the New South Wales coal industry in line with international norms", Darling said.

Australian unions were challenging the introduction of individual employment contracts, which they believed was an attempt to crush unions.

# City Deep staff face axe

~~By Shadrack Mashalaba~~ **By Shadrack Mashalaba**

THE state-owned, loss-making abattoir Abakor is to retrench 160 workers at its City Deep branch in Johannesburg at the end of the month.

A source told *Sowetan Business* yesterday that the abattoir's management held a meeting with worker representatives on Monday to inform them that the company would be retrenching the employees.

The meeting, called by management, was held with the Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu), the Mineworkers Union and representatives of non-unionised workers.

The imminent retrenchments were confirmed by Abakor chief executive Frans van der Vyver. He said it was unfortunate that the company had to resort to cutting workers.

"We have applied every possible

step to turn around City Deep. We even went as far as postponing retrenchments that were due to take place last year but to no avail," he said.

In the past few months the state-owned enterprise has been undergoing changes and recently its new board was appointed.

Abakor manages a number of abattoirs whose shareholder is the Ministry of Agriculture.

Other abattoirs in the group are in Krugersdorp, Pretoria, Benoni, Springs, Bloemfontein, Cato Ridge, East London and Port Elizabeth. The one in Kimberley closed in March this year and 137 workers lost their jobs.

Van der Vyver warned that more retrenchments were coming due to high cost of throughput. By December 1997 the group had lost R5 million in City Deep in the current financial year which ends in June, he said.

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# Beef imports from Zimbabwe due

Michael Hartnack

HARARE — Beef exports to SA worth about Z\$150m a year under SA's updated "most favoured nation" trade pact with Zimbabwe will go some way towards rectifying the trade imbalance between the two countries.

Paul d'Hotman, CE of Zimbabwe's Cattle Producers' Association, said yesterday the beef exports were ready to begin.

Delays in Zimbabwe regaining access to SA markets, and the massive imbalance in trade in favour of SA, were described by President Robert Mugabe last month as "unsustainable".

Some commerce and industry leaders here have warned of a looming "trade war" in view of an alleged aggressive export drive by

SA. They accuse the country of simultaneously maintaining trade protectionism.

D'Hotman said all technical problems with Zimbabwe's 5 000-tons-a-year beef quota had been resolved and the parastatal Cold Storage Commission would look for markets along with Meatmark, established by the cattle producers.

"We were told last week by the SA high commissioner, Kingsley Mambolo, that the technical issues had all been sorted out and that local producers could immediately start exporting beef," said D'Hotman.

Zimbabwe hopes to push other agricultural exports to SA, including citrus, once problems over crop hygiene have been resolved.

Zimbabwe earns about Z\$400m

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~~3~~ MEAT  
a year from beef exports to the European Union.

However, the country has not been able to exploit fully its 9 100-tons-a-year quota for deboned meat.

Repeated scares regarding foot-and-mouth disease, exacerbated by illegal smuggling of stock across quarantine lines from infected areas, have held back exports to Europe.

Stock losses due to recurrent droughts have made the position even worse.

Zimbabwean clothing and textile manufacturers have yet to recapture the SA markets they built up between the signing of the trade pact between the former rulers of SA and Rhodesia in 1964, and Pretoria's adoption of protective tariffs in 1991.

## INSIDE AGRICULTURE

# SA pork breaks out of the sty

(3) MEAT

In many ways SA's pork industry is still showing the way for the red meat industry. Improved market conditions, consumer trends and the nature and relatively small number of commercial pork farmers (about 400) combine to make the pork industry responsive to markets demands.

Three years ago, the pork industry experienced huge pressures, none of them the farmers' fault. The world was using SA as a dumping ground for cheap subsidised pork, distorting prices. Prices were so low that several farmers and even a few processors chose to leave the industry.

In 1991, SA producers had to contend with about 1 000 tons of imports. Only four years later, the figure had soared to 13 000 tons.

Another problem for the red meat industry as a whole was the large-scale inflow of dumped poultry.

Heavily subsidised pork imports have declined, largely through greater tariff protection on most cuts, putting the local industry on a fairer footing with most pork-exporting countries. As a result, the gross value of last year's pork production in real terms was the highest for the past eight years.

Apart from the SA pork industry's more equitable position in the local and export market, consumer trends have assisted its recovery.

Pork is successfully marketed as an alternative white meat (to poultry). Processed pork products are increasingly popular, and careful attention to breeding, raising, slaughtering, butchering and packaging has paid the industry handsome dividends.

About 95 percent of SA pork is sold under contract to major processors such as Eskort. Half of SA's pork is processed before it reaches the market and about 50 percent is sold as fresh meat.

Growth in the fast food industry can only further benefit the industry. Sandwich makers use plenty of processed pork products, and their sales are showing huge growth.

However, SA's average pork consumption a head is at 3,6kg, while pork-eating Americans consume 24,1kg a year.

Each of the top five com-



JUSTINE NOFAL

mercial farms in the US slaughters more animals than the pig population of SA. Obviously, there is plenty of room for growth in the local market.

Commercial pig farming is different from other kinds of red meat production in that only meat of the animal is marketed, and specialised managerial knowledge is required.

Feedlotting techniques (raising piglets from weaners until the slaughter stage) have become a refined science — more like poultry production than expensive red meat production where cattle are raised on the veld.

While pork production is capital-intensive, the farming methods are less subject to external factors, allowing piggery managers to respond quickly to market demands and trends.

SA is the continent's largest commercial pork-producing nation. It provides jobs for more than 4 000 workers with 20 000 dependants, and the processing industry significantly inflates these figures.

About 2 million pigs are slaughtered in SA each year, with an average carcass weight of about 60kg.

Producers are assured of a shared income of at least R700 million.

ET (MR) 31/7/98

# Duty-free meat on SA's doorstep

Louise Cook

PRETORIA — The recent revival of a bilateral free-trade agreement between SA and Zimbabwe, which has been dormant for several years, could see the first arrival of duty-free meat from Zimbabwe in SA in the next few months.

Paul d'Hotman, manager of the Zimbabwean Cattle Producers' Association, said that in addition to the trade agreement, the "roller coaster ride" of the Zimbabwe dollar against the rand boosted trade.

D'Hotman told the Southern African Meat Producers' Forum at the weekend that the volatility of the currency would enable Zimbabwean exporters to take advantage of the 5 000 ton tariff-free quota for meat.

He said the virtual collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar dropped the value of cattle 30% overnight.

In the past, a 40% trade duty made Zimbabwean meat costly to import, but the trade agreement, coupled with the low prices for cattle, reversed the situation.

Gerda van Dijk, trade director at the agriculture department, reportedly confirmed this weekend that both SA and Zimbabwe had received a stream of applications from exporters and local importers interested in having a shot at the new trade line.

In terms of the bilateral agreement, up to 5 000 tons of meat a year can come duty free into SA. This is despite the fact that Zimbabwe — a member of the European Union's Lomé Convention — has struggled to meet its annual EU quota of 9 100 tons.

D'Hotman said that by the middle of this year, only 3 500 tons out of the 9 100 tons quota had been exported to the EU.

"Of particular concern to Zimbabwe beef producers is the status of the EU/SA free trade agreement and its possible affect on the beef industries of southern African countries. Apart from the direct consequences of cheap EU beef landing in SA ... of greater concern is the possibility that this agreement could be used as a

precedent in negotiations for a successor to Lomé."

The planned SA/EU free trade agreement is still being negotiated but fears of its potential negative impact on the beef industries of Namibia and Zimbabwe are rife in southern African industries.

Namibian Meat Producers' Association chairman Jan de Wet told the forum that Namibia asked the EU to halt all subsidies on meat exported to SA as "these export subsidies create an unequal playing field in the southern African market".

He said Namibia managed to get the EU to lower subsidies on beef exports to SA by 45% since February last year.

D'Hotman said it was "still too early" to know if Zimbabwe's meat exports to the EU would suffer as a result of the latest bilateral agreement with SA. Despite the number of slaughterings which "at face value" should have enabled Zimbabwe to meet its EU quota last year, it did not do so due to lower market realisations.

AGRICULTURE - MEAT

1999

# VAT scam on red meat 'costing state

Above-board operators are victims of a growing, multimillion-rand tax evasion on red meat sales, says an alarmed

Louise Cook

SCAMS involving value-added tax on red meat are spiralling and costing the state hundreds of millions of rands in lost revenue.

Also, the meat industry forum of SA said at the weekend the scams threatened the continued viability of law-abiding operators in the R10bn-a-year sector.

The forum, which represents groups like pork and red meat producers, the Feedlot

Association, meat traders, livestock auctioneers and meat brokers, the abattoir association and consumers, said the key problem was the SA revenue service's inability to police VAT collection on red meat sales.

The scams stemmed from government's scrapping last year of VAT on livestock sales but keeping tax on fresh meat.

Gerrie Oberholzer, Roelcor Meat MD and abattoir association chairman, said legitimate abattoirs and operators were being un-

dercut by people dodging VAT on fresh meat sales by reflecting the sales as transactions involving livestock

"There is no way to control the system other than to send out (revenue service) inspectors to premises but there is a severe shortage of inspectors," he said.

According to the forum, the service failed to accept the industry's latest proposals to stop the scams.

"Various discussions were held with the

service and it was mutually agreed that the main problem lies with (its) inability to police the VAT system," said forum spokesman Tim Davidson.

"Recommendations were made to reduce the extent of policing required from about 25 000 participants to 400 abattoirs, but so far this has not been done.

"It would appear that the main stumbling blocks from the service's point of view are a lack of skilled manpower and a reluctance to

deviate from the 'pure' VAT system," he said.

The service was not available for comment at the weekend.

Oberholzer said the solution would be to drop VAT on fresh meat or to reinstate it on livestock sales.

VAT on livestock sales was dropped last April and the problem had become far worse since December. Asked what had led to the sudden increase, he said more people were getting wise to the loopholes in the system.

millions'

meat industry forum

MEAT

BD 11/2/99

# US yields on SA's meatiest demand

Simon Barber  
and Louise Cook

BD 23/2/99

② MEAT

WASHINGTON — The US agriculture department is proposing to declare SA free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease, which might be good news for expatriates hankering after Karoo lamb and beef biltong, but will benefit SA farmers less directly.

SA has asked the US to relax its restrictions on imports of "ruminant" meat — beef, mutton and goat — raised anywhere in the republic except Kruger Park, its

immediate environs and a narrow strip along the border with Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Those zones are still seen as potential sources of foot-and-mouth contagion. However, the rest of SA would be deemed free of rinderpest — not a moment too soon since, by the department's own admission, the last diagnosed case was in 1903.

Aside from the live "wild swine" imported occasionally under special licence, SA pigs would continue to be excluded from the US market because of the continued prevalence of hog cholera, African swine fever and swine vesicular disease.

Whether US supermarket chains are hungry for meat, and how threatened the domestic industry feels, should become clear by April 19, the deadline the department has set for public comment.

Red Meat Producers' Organisation manager Gerhard Schutte said yesterday that it was unlikely that an immediate surge in meat exports to the US was unlikely, but the move could influence potential markets like China.

SA achieved rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease-free status more than a year ago from the world's highest authority on animal disease in Paris, but some countries had ignored this when it came to trade. US statistics show that for years no SA meat has been imported "for consumption", despite the end of sanctions on SA agricultural products.

Even with the easing of restrictions, SA producers will not have as ready access to the US market as those in Australia and New Zealand, America's largest sources. This is because SA imports meat from disease-ridden African countries. US authorities fear that these may contaminate SA exports.

SA meat products will have to be certified by a full-time, salaried veterinary official of the national government as having "not been comingled with or exposed to meat originating in, imported from, transported through, or ... otherwise been in" countries to the north.

The Federal Register (government gazette) notice, setting out the proposed rule changes, seeks to reassure US producers that they have nothing to fear from SA competition. "Any effect on domestic supplies of ruminant meat and meat products would be negligible because we believe it is unlikely SA would redirect a significant portion (of production for export) ... given that restrictions would remain in place for export to the US."

## Farmers lose out as meat glut lowers prices

Louise Cook **3** MEAT

DROUGHT is prompting farmers in the southern Free State in particular to market their livestock prematurely to avoid running up feed costs during the coming winter.

Analysts say the resulting glut of meat is forcing prices down at a time the farmers can least afford it.

"Nearly half the province is already in a crisis due to a lack of grazing," says Free State red meat producers' organisation chairman Eppie Nel. "We have asked the local agriculture department to help transport crop remnants to the affected areas (for feed)."

In addition, sheep farmers have arranged with Spoornet to transport emergency animal feed supplies to southern Free State farmers.

Meanwhile, farmers are calling on government to impose import quotas on the European Union to reduce the size of the glut.

SA normally imports meat, mostly from neighbouring states, to meet domestic demand. However, when it comes to top grades, local production outstrips demand.

Meat industry prices have been sluggish in recent years, due mainly to low pork and chicken prices that provided consumers with an affordable alternative to the more expensive red meats.

However, Agrimark Trends, a company specialising in the analysis of agricultural markets, believes in the long term an expected improvement in global market prices of red meat will boost local red meat prices.

"World prices have moved away from the low point in 1998. Prices of live cattle in the US are on their way to break through the 10-year moving average. For SA this means that import parity prices could rise, bringing a reduction of import volumes.

"Generally, there is an inverse correlation between beef prices and beef imports."

The Free State farmers also want government to speed up its handling of an application that was made nearly a year ago for a fixed tariff on imported meat, saying it would address the issue of illegal imports and tariff evasion.

BD 3/5/99

# Baboon abattoir plan shot down

3 MEAT  
(MEAT)

By Khathu Mamalla

THE Northern Province government has shot down plans to construct a multimillion rand baboon abattoir in Warmbaths, saying that the matter is sensitive and all stakeholders had not been consulted on the issue.

Premier Ngoako Ramatlhodi said the planned abattoir could not proceed before thorough consultations with all the people had taken place.

Last week a group of white farmers announced that they were planning to build a baboon abattoir in Warmbaths. The abattoir was expected to process baboon meat, polony and canned meat. Baboon nails and teeth were to be exported to the Asian markets to be used as sex stimulants.

Ramatlhodi's spokesman, Mr Kenny Mathivha, said yesterday that the announcement had been met with mixed reaction. He said some people

who believed that if people wanted to eat baboon meat, they should be allowed to.

"However, there are others, such as the animal rights groups, who are totally opposed to the plan. They have described the plan as outrageous."

He said no licence had been granted for such an abattoir to be erected.

The Department of Agriculture, Land and Environment has also condemned the plan.

Department spokesman Mr Thembi Makhuvhevele said the slaughtering of baboons for export was an appalling idea.

Makhuvhevele said although baboons were classified as problem animals in certain areas of the province, that did not mean that they should be exterminated.

He said the abattoir would have a huge impact on the population of baboons in the area.

Sowetan 24/5/99



# SA Revenue Service moves to stop illegal meat sales

EST (M) 21/7/99 (3) MEAT  
**LESLEY VAN DUFFELEN**

The South African Revenue Service (Sars) has stepped in to halt the sale of illegal meat and livestock on the market which, it says, is threatening businesses.

To protect the meat industry, which says it is losing millions of rands, Sars has announced it will withdraw all zero-rated VAT concessions on livestock and meat products, including imports, from July 1. It has also withdrawn the self-invoicing concession granted to meat producers, feedlots, abattoirs and agents. Those who continue with self-invoicing will forfeit their input tax claims.

This gives the industry just one month to get its house to pay VAT at the standard rate from farm to retailer.

Sars, after consultation with the industry, made an agreement a year ago that the supply of livestock and meat to

the point of retail would be VAT free.

Christo Henning, a spokesman for the revenue service, said at the weekend that the change came at the request of the regulated industry which had seen its sales drying up as meat trickled on to the market at cheaper prices without VAT.

Henning was unable to give a total loss figure, but said: "If Sars is going this far to regulate the industry we are talking millions of rands. The responsibility lies with Revenue Services to protect industries. If they are damaged, the Receiver will also lose."

It was also difficult to pinpoint the leak, he said. Meat was finding its way informally on to the market through independent franchises, sales to office colleagues and to spaza shops.

The new system would create an audit trail leading to the supply point, Henning said.

# Cape alert in imported meat scare

③ MEAT

ARG 8/6/99

**BEAUREGARD TROMP**  
STAFF REPORTER

**About 120 tons of Belgian chicken and pork have landed on Western Cape supermarket shelves since January, as the Department of Health warns consumers to steer clear of Belgian poultry, meat and dairy products.**

Most imported meat is made into locally processed polonies and sausages, and this does not have to name the country of origin on the packaging.

Livestock feed contaminated with dioxin, a known cancer-causing agent, was distributed to 1 400 Belgian farms. The poison is believed to be present in food prepared from the processed meats and by-products of the animals.

In Luxembourg today, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene was to take part in an explanation of the food scare to be presented to European Union health

ministers and the European Commission.

In Belgium, butter has become the most recent food to be pulled from supermarket shelves, following eggs, poultry, pork, beef and all their by-products.

But since January more than a thousand tons of Belgian chicken and 400 tons of Belgian pork have been imported into South Africa.

At present about 1 020 tons of processed chickens and 600 tons of pork are in port. This food will be shipped back to Belgium.

"Until we get more specific information we are saying people should not have any Belgian foodstuffs," said the director of veterinary public health, Gideon Brückner.

There were indications that the Belgian authorities had been aware of the problem as far back as February but had only issued a warning last week.

"The high-risk product at the moment is poultry, but we have also put all pork, beef, and dairy products from Belgium on hold

since Friday," he said.

Karen Grobler, spokeswoman for the SA Meat Industry Company, an umbrella organisation representing the local meat industry, said that all imported meats should be clearly marked with the country of origin.

"But about 85% of the meat coming into South Africa from other countries is frozen and would be processed and used to manufacture things like polonies and sausages," Ms Grobler said. Manufacturers of processed products were not obliged to indicate the country of origin, she said.

Dr Brückner said the Belgian authorities were tracing affected farms so officials could track down consignments of meat that could be contaminated.

Most of the consignments of poultry from Belgium are believed to have been distributed in the Durban region.

**Belgium faces crisis, page 2**

# SA freezes imports as meat ban hits Belgium

Louise Cook

③ MEAT

THE names of Belgian farms from which contaminated meat could have been imported since January would be released in SA, the agriculture department's food safety director, Gideon Bruckner, said yesterday.

This follows the worldwide ban at the weekend of imports of poultry, pork, beef and dairy products from Belgium after it was found that the products, especially poultry and pork, contained toxins which posed a serious health threat to the public.

Scientists found dangerously high levels of dioxin, a toxic chemical linked to cancer, in the meat of animals raised on 13 Belgium farms. "The dioxin on these farms has been traced to a small amount of combustion oil incorporated into feed at a food manufacturing plant," Bruckner said.

So far, 1 020 tons of poultry and 500 tons of pork, potentially contaminated with dioxin have come into SA, he said. However, the department had slapped a ban on release of meat now in SA harbours and banned any further imports of poultry and pork from Belgium.

Bruckner said it was likely the imports would be sent back. In Belgium, authorities have started removing all locally produced chickens and eggs from supermarket shelves. Beef was not a high risk, Bruckner said. "The biggest problem lies with pork and chicken. Most of the meat that came into SA, came in through Durban harbour," he said.

BD 8 | 6 | 99 E1 vets discuss meat crisis: Page 7

# SA authorities ban Belgian meat and dairy products

**LYNNE ALTENROXEL**

PRETORIA: South Africa has become the latest country to ban Belgian meat, milk and eggs from its shelves, following Europe's latest food scare over cancer-causing dioxin contaminating the meat of animals which were accidentally given dioxin in their feed.

Mounting global panic over the potent carcinogen has already cost Belgium over R3 billion as tons of its meat and dairy products have been withdrawn from markets worldwide. Yesterday the Democratic Republic of Congo also decided to ban imports. McDonalds this week pulled dairy desserts off its menus in four countries.

At least 416 chicken, 500 pig and 150 cattle farms in Belgium have been ordered to halt the transport and slaughter of their animals following the scare.

Yesterday saw major local retailers move to assure customers that they had no Belgian meat on their

shelves. Woolworths assured its customers that only the (non-dairy) raw ingredients for its Belgian chocolate originated in that country, and that there was no Belgian meat in its stores.

Pick 'n Pay's national butcheries general manager Malcolm Baxter said his company had no meat from Belgium "or of European origin for that matter".

But statistics from the SA Meat Industry Company reflect that up to 8,8% of meat imported from overseas countries last year came from Belgium.

This meat, which consists primarily of beef and pork — spare ribs in particular — is sold by meat wholesalers to retailers, restaurants, pie and sausage producers and a variety of other companies.

Henry Badenhorst, head of the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters, said association members were "concerned and shocked". He and other meat wholesalers have accused the Department of

Agriculture of exaggerating figures of Belgian animal product imports. "Belgium has from time to time been suppliers of certain meat cuts, but they've never been a major supplier," said Robert Papendorf, head of Roecor Meat in Natal. SA, he said, also imports pork ribs from Hungary, England and France, lamb and mutton from New Zealand and Australia and chicken from America.

Following a meeting of senior officials in the Departments of Health and Agriculture in Pretoria yesterday, the government announced that it would place an embargo on the imports of poultry, pork, beef and dairy from Belgium.

"The requirements for labelling of food and food products will also be investigated with the aim of possibly enforcing the identification of the origin of products, in processed foods," said Dr Gideon Brückner, director of Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health in the Department of Agriculture.

● See Picture Page 5

③ MEAT CT 10/16/99

# SA delicatessens hardest hit by foul Belgian meat

SUNDAY TIMES REPORTER

## ③ MEAT

EXPENSIVE processed meats at delicatessens and restaurants pose the greatest risk to South African consumers in the Belgian food scare.

All imports of Belgian meat, poultry and dairy products were banned last week after revelations that 1 400 Belgian farms had used animal feed contaminated with the cancer-causing chemical dioxin.

Dr Gideon Brückner, director of food safety and veterinary public health in the Department of Agriculture, said the likeliest source of dioxin-contaminated foods is processed meats like pâté, sausages and cold meats containing chicken, pork or beef.

He said South Africa had imported about 1 000 tons of Belgian meat — 52 containers of chicken and 21 containers of pork — since January, when dioxin-contaminated food hit the market.

Belgian authorities kept the contamination secret from the rest of the world until last week after a television programme revealed

that dioxin-laced fat was used to make animal feed.

"Belgian meat is mainly destined for processing into high quality pâtés and cold meats. You won't find it being sold as fresh meat at your local supermarket," said Brückner.

South African Meat Processors Association chairman Pieter de Klerck said none of his 30 members used Belgian meat products.

Gaps in South African food laws have so far made it impossible for the departments of health and agriculture to trace where possibly dioxin-tainted meat has ended up.

Brückner said confidentiality clauses in legislation prevented him from revealing which companies had imported the 1 000 tons of

Belgian meat.

The European Commission released a list of risky Belgian foods: fresh, minced and sausage meats, meat loaf, bacon, pork, pâté, liver pâté, salami, ham, lard, suet, milk and butter.

South Africa's major food retailers, Pick 'n Pay, Woolworths, Shoprite Checkers and Spar, were reported as saying they did not sell Belgian meat and dairy products. Upmarket Johannesburg delicatessen Thrupps said it had removed all pâté from its shelves as a precaution. Thrupps supplier, Thierry van der Bosch of Corné Delicatessen, said it had withdrawn its chicken liver pâté even though it had been assured it was not contaminated.

ST 13/6/99

# SA meat producers warn of dumping

By Bhungani Mzolo  
Health Reporter

SOUTH Africa's meat producers have issued a warning that this country could become a dumping zone for unneeded frozen meat from European countries.

The National Emergent Redmeat Producers Organisation (Nerpo) said it was alarmed by the large scale imports of frozen meat currently sold in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

General manager of Nerpo, Mr Aggrey Mahanyana, said cheap meat imports had a negative effect on local producers' prices as this made it difficult for the emerging red meat producers to enter and compete fairly in the industry.

Mayanyana said: "The quality of these cheap meat imports is questionable, specifically for human consumption."

Dr Gideon Bruckner, director of food safety and veterinary public health in the Department of Agriculture, however, disputed these claims.

Bruckner, who recently announced the banning of poultry, beef and dairy importation from Belgium, said imported food was subjected to strict health requirements before it was allowed in the country.

He added: "The Minister of Agriculture, Mr Derek Hanekom, has always encouraged the South African public to buy food produced in South Africa."

However, Bruckner said that as long as local farmers did not produce sufficiently, the Government would have to import food.

Meanwhile, the Redmeat Producers Organisation (RPO) has congratulated the Department of Agriculture for banning Belgium meat products.

The dioxin debacle emphasises once again the fact that consumers should give preference to red meat produced in South Africa," said RPO's spokesman Dr Jan van der Westhuizen.

# 'No risk' from Belgian meat

By Bhungani Mzolo  
Health Reporter

(3) MEAT

SOUTH African consumers have nothing to worry about as far as the import of poultry, pork, beef and dairy products is concerned, according to supermarket chain stores.

This follows a nationwide scare that food imported from Belgium contains substances that cause cancer.

Pick 'n Pay butcheries national general manager Mr Malcolm Baxter said they did not import anything from Europe, including Belgium. No poultry is being imported and their lamb and mutton comes from Australia and New Zealand.

"Consumers can rest assured that our meat products are safe," Baxter said.

Mr Jacques Theunissen of Checkers said they did not import any meat from Belgium either. "We import directly from certain countries but not Belgium."

Department of agriculture director of food safety and veterinary public health Dr Gideon Brückner said they had imposed an embargo on the importation of poultry, pork, beef and dairy products from Belgium after reports that they may contain dioxin, an agent which possibly causes cancer.

The authorities would investigate the requirements for the labelling of food products, aiming to enforce the identification of the origin of products in processed foods.

To guide the public the following products from Belgium are risky: fresh meat, mechanically recovered meat, minced meat and meat preparations, and meat products of animal oil, raw milk, heat-treated milk and milk-based products, rendered fats, processed animal proteins and raw material for the manufacturing of animal feeds.

"The Department of Agriculture will maintain the ban on Belgian imports until we are confident that the Belgian authorities can render the necessary guarantees to meet our level of protection for human health," Brückner said.

*Sowetan 11/6/99*

# Council move on meat danger

Project to clean up informal butcher trade as health risks multiply

APR 27 1999  
③ MEAT

MYOLISI GOPHE  
STAFF REPORTER

An increase in tapeworm infestation has prompted the Cape Metropolitan Council to step in and improve the conditions in which animals are slaughtered by informal butchers selling meat in townships around the city.

On many corners, informal butchers sell meat on blood-spattered tables without realising the dangers this poses to their customers. Much of the meat comes from slaughtered animals that were never inspected for quality.

A study conducted by the Medical Research Council has shown that the incidence of tapeworms and malnutrition has increased in adults and children alike, especially in townships.

In Khayelitsha, researchers found amazingly high rates of tapeworm infestation at four schools. At two of the schools, every pupil was infested, while 94% and 91% were infested at the other two.

Tapeworms, which can grow up to two metres long, can cause inflammation of the intestines, a potentially fatal condition.

Although some township meat sellers buy from butcheries, which means animals have been inspected prior to going to abattoirs, others buy meat from "informal slaughterers" who operate in, or just outside, townships.

In these instances, there are no inspections of either the live animals or of the carcasses, which means the animals could be riddled with parasites.

Informal butchering often takes place on the ground. The blood usually drains into the soil or into a storm water system, eventually contaminating inland water sources.

In spite of these dangers, and because of high unemployment and lack of facilities in the townships, traders have no option but to do things



MONDE DLAKAVU

Hard at work: Busisiwe Fumbani, 15, helps at her mother's meat stand in Langa, where informal butchers are the focus of a new project

the shortest and cheapest way.

The Cape Metropolitan Council has now launched a programme encouraging informal butchers in Langa to sell meat only from animals slaughtered under proper conditions.

The council's Healthy Cities Project has linked up with other stakeholders, including the provincial Department of Agriculture and the

Langa's Small Traders' Association, to get communities involved.

Edgar Carolisson, co-ordinator of the Healthy Cities Project, said the objective of a workshop held last week at Ulwazi Centre in Langa was to develop healthy meat markets at which communities could buy meat with confidence.

Traders would be able to display

meat with marks showing that it had been inspected. He said communities would be trained to "identify harmful meat" and provided with proper facilities for slaughtering.

A steering committee has been formed to monitor the development of the pilot project in Langa.

Council officials plan to move into other areas as well.



# it rise

Trading conditions improved initially in the six months, during which 28 new stores were added, 36 revamped or relocated and three closed. Nine stores were closed as part of the Hi-Fi Corporation deal, which was effective from the beginning of March. The net interest situation improved from payment of R10 million to receipts of R9 million. Management said cash sales increased for 40 percent of the group's business. The group substantially increased cashflow from operational activities in the review period. The situation improves the group's ability to fund internally generated cash," it said. Lower interest rates are expected to benefit middle-income groups, which will have a direct effect on the group's retail chain.

## INSIDE AGRICULTURE

# Fraud is rife in the red meat industry

ET (Mar) 29/7/99

MEAT

Many factors have adversely affected the health of the South African red meat industry in recent years.

Livestock theft continued to increase, as farmers lost 74 000 cattle worth R183 million, and 128 000 sheep and goats worth R40 million, in 1998.

Cheap red meat and poultry, heavily subsidised in the countries of origin, reach our shores without proper tariffs, eroding market share for the local, unsubsidised industry.

The negative image of red meat among consumers has put the brakes on red meat production worldwide and put a definite dampener on producer prices everywhere for the past decade or so.

None of these, however, has

been as damaging to the South African red meat industry as the widespread VAT fraud that has become endemic. A special investigation unit was appointed by the South African Revenue Service (Sars) to examine the problem and make recommendations.

While the investigation was under way, Sars introduced temporary regulations in May last year which brought relief to the industry.

The regulations allowed livestock to change hands between registered vendors at a zero VAT rate, and permitted self-invoicing for VAT purposes. These regulations were withdrawn on July 1 this year, and



JUSTINE NOFAL

the supply of livestock by registered vendors reverted to the standard rate.

Several fraud schemes, most of them involving cross-border trade, have evolved in the meat trade, resulting in losses to the fiscus and market disruption. Essentially, VAT fraud

gives the perpetrators a 14 percent competitive advantage.

In one case, speculators buy livestock from farmers in their capacity as principals and sell the livestock at auctions. In return, they supply the farmers with falsified export documentation. The VAT is collected by speculators, posing as agents, on behalf of the farmers on the

sales at auctions, but it is never paid to the farmer.

The reversion to a pure VAT system, after consultation with all stakeholders in the red meat industry, means Sars will have to police the industry better than ever before if it is to cut out the cancer of fraud.

Gerhard Schutte, the Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) manager, says the RPO is on record saying it believes red meat is a basic foodstuff, and as such should be VAT zero-rated.

The RPO, he says, has serious doubts about the government's capacity to police all role players in the chain. If such capacity is indeed lacking, he says, the playing field will remain uneven, and legitimate participants in the industry will remain at a disadvantage.

## Saudis ban beef imports from SA

Louise Cook **MEAT**

SAUDI Arabia has banned the importation of beef from SA on the grounds that it would spread mad cow disease, but though Saudi authorities had not officially informed government of the measure by yesterday.

Food safety, veterinary and public health director Gideon Bruckner dismissed the allegations as "utter nonsense".

"SA has had ongoing problems with Saudi Arabia over beef imports. They have said in the past that our beef was contaminated due to rinderpest in Africa. We eventually got the ban lifted when we informed them that rinderpest had been eradicated at the turn of the century," Bruckner said.

Very small quantities of beef is exported to Saudi Arabia, mostly to be used in processed meat like sausages and polonies.

SA imposed a ban on British beef after the UK government admitted a possible link between mad cow disease in cattle and the deadly Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans. The ban on British beef was likely to be lifted soon since the European Union recently accepted the safety of UK beef.

Bruckner said SA was satisfied with the British guarantees.

SA Meat Industry Company GM Boet Venter said local beef exports to Saudi Arabia were negligible. "The allegations of mad cow disease are unfounded, but Saudi Arabia is not a member of the World Trade Organisation and can therefore do as it likes."

A near-global ban on SA beef due to foot-and-mouth disease — a far greater threat — was lifted last year through co-operation with the World Trade Organisation.

Recent talks between the meat industry and US health authorities about SA's new status as foot-and-mouth disease free could boost beef exports to the US, Venter said.

The Saudi ban on SA beef was referred to Land and Agriculture Minister Thoko Didiza to deal with the matter on a political level, Bruckner said.

BD 11/18/99

# Saudis malign SA beef

GUSTAV THIEL  
CONSUMER WRITER

③ MEAT

ET 12/8/99

THE government has accused Saudi Arabia of trying to spread false rumours about beef in South Africa being infected with mad cow disease.

According to Gideon Bruckner, director of food safety and veterinary public health in the Department of Agriculture, the Saudi government "has on some level been trying to spread rumours for three months that our beef products are infected with so-called mad cow disease (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy).

"Our ministry has been in contact with the South African embassy in Riyadh to try and get them to persuade the Saudi government to retract any statements regarding this disease."

Agriculture Minister Thoko Didiza said Saudi Arabia had not informed the South African government officially of the reasons behind the rumours.

A meat industry spokesperson said there was no record of the disease ever having occurred in South African cattle.

Bruckner said Saudi Arabia was only country to allege that it had.

The Saudi-owned *Asharq* newspaper reported on Tuesday that Saudi Arabia had imposed a ban on all beef imports from South Africa.

Bruckner said Saudi Arabia was "a very small" importer of South African beef, mainly in the form of beef patties. "We only export 30 to 40 tons of beef to them a year, so it is not of major concern to us," he said. "It is probably of more concern on a political level. The minister is trying to sort this out."

Didiza said the Department of Agriculture was "aware of previous attempts to deny beef exports to Saudi Arabia for reasons that could not be scientifically justified".

Bruckner said *Asharq* would publish a full account of Didiza's statement today.

Didiza pointed out that South Africa was one of the first countries to impose strict import requirements to prevent the introduction of the disease when it was first identified in 1986.

A ban on further imports of British beef was imposed in 1996 when a possible link between a new variant of Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease in humans and the eating of infected beef was suggested.

In accordance with recommendations of the World Health Organisation, South Africa also has a monitoring system to screen deaths in cattle related to suspected neurological diseases.

Didiza said South Africa had earned a respected status in the international veterinary community for its attempts to control animal diseases.

# Meat groups clash over funds

③ MEAT BD 5/8/99

**Louise Cook**

THE first battle over money erupted recently in the new agricultural trusts sector with the National Emergent Red Meat Producers' Organisation (Nerpo) accusing the meat industry trust of paying too little too late to the emerging black farmer sector.

Nerpo GM Agri Mahanjana told the trustees in a letter on Monday that the organisation's national executive council was "extremely disappointed with the amount and time taken to approve the application" for funding for Nerpo.

Mahanjana said that Nerpo was dissatisfied with the trust's fund-

ing of the SA Meat Industry Company (Samic), a nonprofit company set up after the closure of the Meat Board.

Meat industry trust chairman Tim Davidson defended the trust's decision. He said there was a "huge difference" between Nerpo, an organisation that served part of the meat industry, and Samic, which served the whole industry.

"In terms of the trust's criteria, organisational funding is still an emotional issue.

Nerpo is the only organisation that received money — others like the emerging traders' association have not."

Davidson said the trust also

took into account that Nerpo received a grant from another source last year. The trust is worth about R20m, but is expected to expand as more outstanding compulsory levies are collected. Nerpo was granted R450 000, but Mahanjana asked for a meeting between the council and the trustees to clear up the issue of future funding.

A total of about 11 trusts were set up after the demise of the agricultural marketing boards and the conversion of KWV to a company last year. At present, the remaining assets of the control boards are being transferred to the different trusts, believed to be worth between R500m and R550m.