

A Step Toward Reopening Egypt Markets

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(NRA) staff escorted two scientists from the Central Laboratory for Food and Feed in Egypt to the United States to examine the production of poultry by-product meal and feather meal. This activity was aimed at resolving concerns Egyptian officials had about bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Upon their return to Egypt they produced a favorable report on the U.S. manufacturing practices of poultry protein meals.

Shortly after this trip, avian influenza appeared in the Egyptian poultry flock and Egypt decided to ban the import of poultry by-products from any country, irrelevant of the avian influenza status of that country. A decree by the Egyptian government on November 7, 2005, formalized the ban on importing all poultry by-products.

Uruguay and Argentina benefited from the ban on U.S. product by exporting 97,000 metric tons and 107,000 metric tons of meat and bone meal to Egypt in 2004 and 2005, respectively. In 2006, Egypt only imported approximately 66,000 metric tons of meat and bone meal from Uruguay and Argentina. Also, Paraguay began exporting to Egypt in 2006 as shown in the table of global exports of animal protein meals into Egypt.

In an effort to reopen this market to U.S. poultry proteins, a proposal was given to the Egyptian government in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) reiterating import requirements suggested by APHIS and asking for market access. USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service staff in Cairo, Egypt, followed-up several times with no response. Then in 2007, after the Egyptians indicated an interest in visiting the United States to view poultry protein meal rendering facilities, the USDA invited key government decision makers for plant tours and a meeting with USDA/APHIS representatives. After numerous attempts, the Egyptian delegation finally arrived in the United States in mid-June 2008. The NRA's overall goal of the trip was for the delegation to return to Egypt and issue a favorable report in regards to reopening the Egyptian market to U.S. poultry protein meals. Upon returning to Egypt the delegation will issue a report to a technical committee, who will then issue its recommendation on the possibility of re-opening the market to U.S. poultry proteins.

The delegation visited an integrated rendering operation, Mountain View Rendering in Virginia, and an independent

renderer, Valley Proteins in Fayetteville, NC. The staff at these plants gave very thorough tours and handled all the questions from the Egyptian officials. Following these visits the Egyptians met with APHIS to discuss import requirements.

Below are some observations from the plant visits.

- The delegation was interested in the amount of animal proteins the United States produces and how much is used domestically.

- Egypt will want a pork-free statement on the export certificate.

- The delegation was worried about dead in-transit birds going into the poultry meal, with the biggest concern regarding feathers. It was pointed out that the amount of feathers would be extremely miniscule.

- The delegation was also concerned about the shelf life of poultry proteins due to a regulation in Egypt that imports must have at least 50 percent of their shelf life remaining when imported.

All in all, the team was very positive and assuring that they would issue a favorable report. **R**

Global Exports of Animal Protein Meals to Egypt (metric tons)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Argentina	0	11,452	62,299	58,967	29,616	49,238
Uruguay	6,056	23,366	34,942	48,293	23,501	27,238
Brazil	0	0	6,717	1,992	7,160	5,147
Germany	0	196	4,783	789	0	0
United States	105,409	71,406	1,910	0	0	0
New Zealand	0	0	0	753	0	0
Paraguay	0	0	0	1,200	5,050	7,750
Croatia	0	0	0	3,722	0	0
Australia	0	500	0	6,300	1,100	0
Total	111,465	106,920	110,651	122,016	66,427	89,373

Source: Global Trade Atlas