



THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY  
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT  
POLICY

Voluntary  Public

**Date:** 3/2/2015

**GAIN Report Number:** CB1504

## **St. Lucia**

**Post:** Miami ATO

### **St. Lucia Lifts BSE-related Restrictions on U.S. Beef**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Market Access

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Trade Policy Incident Report

Trade Policy Monitoring

**Approved By:**

Michael T. Henney

**Prepared By:**

Omar Gonzalez

**Report Highlights:**

On February 16, 2015, the St. Lucia Veterinary Service granted full market access to U.S. beef and beef products, ending 12 years of restrictions in place since the U.S. reported its first case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). These restrictions required USDA to implement an Export Verification (EV) program for St. Lucia which significantly limited the meat options and U.S. suppliers available to the market. With such restrictions now removed, the U.S. is positioned to greatly expand the St. Lucian market beyond the current \$3 million level. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service Export Library reflect St. Lucia's updated import requirements.

## **Executive Summary:**

The St. Lucia Veterinary Service has granted full market access to U.S. beef and beef products, ending 12 years of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)-related restrictions. These restrictions required USDA to implement an Export Verification (EV) program for St. Lucia to ensure that only boneless beef and boneless beef products derived from cattle less than 30 months of age (LT30) were exported to St. Lucia.

In 2014 the United States exported \$2.8 million in beef and beef products to St. Lucia. This represents only 0.04 percent of U.S. beef exports worldwide. While this may make this development seem inconsequential, it is nonetheless a significant one for a variety of reasons. First of all, one must consider the scale of the market. St. Lucia is a small island nation of only 163,000 people. Beef and beef products are the fourth largest category of all U.S. agricultural and related product exports to St. Lucia. Secondly, with the improved market access for U.S. beef, U.S. suppliers can expect to sell a greater variety of cuts (particularly bone-in cuts) to their St. Lucia customers, increasing their exports overall. Moreover, with the EV restriction being lifted more U.S. exporters can now benefit from sales to St. Lucia (not just those participating in the EV program). From a broader perspective, this is also significant because St. Lucia was the last country in the Caribbean to rescind its BSE-related restrictions on U.S. beef, meaning that now the entire Caribbean region is once again fully receptive to U.S. beef. In 2014 the Caribbean islands overseen by the CBATO represented the fourth largest regional market for U.S. beef, importing a record high \$154 million.

St. Lucia also stands to benefit from this development as well. For St. Lucian importers the absence of an EV program for beef means lower import costs and a larger pool of suppliers from which to source from. This will hopefully lead to lower prices for consumers and the tourist trade. Given the region's reliance on tourism as a major source of revenue, remaining price competitive relative to their neighbors is an important consideration for all islands, including St. Lucia.

## **IMPROVED MARKET ACCESS FOR U.S. BEEF IN ST. LUCIA**

On February 16, 2015 the St. Lucia Veterinary Service granted full market access to U.S. beef and beef products, ending 12 years of BSE-related restrictions. These restrictions required USDA to implement an EV program for St. Lucia to ensure that only boneless beef and boneless beef products derived from LT30 cattle were exported to St. Lucia. The new (updated) import requirements are outlined in detail in USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Export Library (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products/export-library-requirements-by-country/St-Lucia>).

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2003, following the announcement of the first case of BSE in the United States, St. Lucia (among many countries around the world) imposed restrictions on U.S. beef. To address these restrictions FSIS had to implement an Export Verification (EV) program to ensure that only boneless beef and boneless beef products derived from LT30 cattle were exported to St. Lucia. Beginning in 2004, FAS initiated an extensive outreach program to assure veterinary officials in St. Lucia and the broader Caribbean Basin that BSE-related animal health, feed and food safety controls had been put in place to ensure the safeness of U.S. beef and to preclude the need for any import restrictions on U.S. beef. Actions undertaken by FAS included:

- Partnering with the U.S. Meat Export Federation to carry out a Caribbean CVO team visit to the United States in February 2004. The Caribbean CVO team met with USDA and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials in Washington, D.C. to receive a briefing on all the BSE-related regulatory controls put in place. While in Washington, the team attended a briefing on the BSE disease sponsored by the American Meat Institute (AMI) Foundation, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, and USMEF. The team also visited a meat packing facility in Greeley, Colorado to see first-hand how BSE related measures were being implemented in the field.
- Partnering with USMEF and the Nebraska Corn Board to carry out a second Caribbean CVO visit to receive a special technical update and explore the latest developments on BSE in October 2006. This mission also included a visit to USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well as a visit to Lincoln, Nebraska, to visit feed lots, meat packing facilities and engage with academia at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln to discuss the latest meat science technology and research. The mission ended with a visit to a meat exporting facility in Miami, Florida.
- From 2004 to 2015, five different Directors of the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office in Miami, in coordination with FAS headquarters and representatives from FSIS and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), conducted bilateral negotiations with St. Lucia Veterinary Officials on the matter. These negotiations included several trips to St. Lucia and numerous phone conferences with St. Lucian Veterinary Officials.
- From 2005-2014, FAS employed the Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP) to expose St. Lucia Ministry of Agriculture officials to the U.S. systems governing meat inspection, HACCP, food safety (microbiology), animal health (trans-boundary animal diseases), and agricultural biotechnology. The CFP has played an instrumental role in raising their awareness of the extensive health-safety safeguards in place in to protect the U.S. beef supplied to all consumers regardless of country.
- Following the May 2013 OIE recognition of the United States’ BSE risk status upgrade from “controlled risk” to “negligible risk,” the CBATO ramped up negotiations with St. Lucia, leading to the elimination of all BSE-related restrictions in February 2015. Reaching this point has been a team effort and it underscores just how effective public and private partnerships can be.

## **IMPACT**

In 2014, the United States exported \$2.8 million in beef and beef products to St. Lucia. This represents only 0.04 percent of U.S. beef exports worldwide. While this may make this development seem inconsequential, it is nonetheless a significant one for a variety of reasons. First of all, one must consider the scale of the market. St. Lucia is a small island nation of only 163,000 people. Beef and beef products are the fourth largest category of all U.S. agricultural and related product exports to St. Lucia. Secondly, with the improved market access for U.S. beef, U.S. suppliers can expect to sell a greater variety of cuts (particularly bone-in cuts) to their St. Lucia customers, increasing their exports overall. Moreover, with the EV restriction being lifted more U.S. exporters can now benefit from sales to St. Lucia (not just those participating in the EV program). From a broader perspective, this is also significant because St. Lucia was the last country in the Caribbean to rescind its BSE-related restrictions on U.S. beef, meaning that now the entire Caribbean region is once again fully receptive to U.S. beef. In 2014 the Caribbean islands overseen by the CBATO represented the fourth largest regional market for U.S. beef, importing a record high \$154 million.

St. Lucia also stands to benefit from this development as well. For St. Lucian importers the absence of an EV

program for beef means lower import costs and a larger pool of suppliers from which to source from. This will hopefully lead to lower prices for consumers and the tourist trade. Given the region's reliance on tourism as a major source of revenue, remaining price competitive relative to their neighbors is an important consideration for all islands, including St. Lucia.