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Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis  
Commissioner for Health and  
Food Safety  
European Commission  
200, rue de la Loi  
BE-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

**Re: Possible impact of the large-scale meat fraud detected in the state of Paraná in Brazil**

Dear Commissioner,

Copa and Cogeca are extremely concerned about the adverse impact in the EU of the large-scale meat fraud detected in the state of Paraná in Brazil. This is not the first time that the Brazilian authorities are facing fraud. Unfortunately, we have not seen sufficient corrective measures put in place, in particular when it comes to their exports to Europe. Negative media coverage on the matter could have a disastrous effect on consumption of meat in Europe, no matter what the origin. In fact, EU meat producers could end up paying the price of food fraud and the relaxed food safety rules and their enforcement in other parts of the world.

Copa and Cogeca strongly support the European Commission's decision to reject the European veterinary certificate for meat imports from the four Brazilian sites affected by food fraud. Nevertheless, this decision does not go far enough to prevent such a situation from reoccurring in the long term. We need to recognise that the missions carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and the controls undertaken at EU borders have unfortunately been unable to detect the weaknesses in the Brazilian food safety system which have apparently been going on for more than ten years.

Copa and Cogeca call on the European Commission to closely monitor the steps taken by the Brazilian authorities to ensure that no other production sites have the same problem, and to draw up a road map for addressing such fraud in the future. The European Commission needs to ensure that imports to the EU meet the high EU standards.

European farmers and their cooperatives cannot afford to lower EU food safety standards or put EU consumer confidence at risk due to fraud in non-EU countries. Moreover, they are committed to EU production standards which in the case of beef provide full individual traceability of cattle throughout the animals lifetime. This is the only way to ensure the proper implementation of food safety standards. Copa and Cogeca refuse to allow double standards in food safety for meat to be applied vis-a-vis imports on the EU single market.

Brazil is a key world player in meat production and is home to major multinational companies. We consider that the minimum traceability requirement of 90 days at state level or the 120 day rule if the animal is transported from one state to another is not acceptable. The reality is that Brazil has failed to comply with both world food safety standards and our own high EU food safety standards. Copa and Cogeca consider that the European Commission needs to take much

stronger trade action, such as imposing a temporary ban on Brazilian imports to the EU, which has already been done by many other non-EU countries.

Brazil's failure to apply and monitor EU-equivalent food safety standards for meat raises serious concerns about the ongoing EU-Mercosur trade negotiations. In beef, we therefore reiterate our request to implement the full individual traceability scheme. We believe that this scheme is a prerequisite for the next stages of the Mercosur trade negotiations.

European farmers have made a major effort over the decades to improve traceability along the chain, from day one of an animal's life right through to the slaughterhouse, carrying the financial burden of meeting consumer demands and maintaining consumer confidence. Furthermore, the European system has proven effective in tackling possible food fraud. We therefore call on the European Commission to launch a promotion campaign on EU production standards for specialised beef production in the EU. This is the only tool available which can maintain European consumer confidence in red meat.

Please be informed that a copy of this letter has been sent to your fellow Commissioners, Cecilia Malmström and Phil Hogan.

Yours faithfully,



Pekka Pesonen  
Secretary General

Cc: Cecilia Malmström and Phil Hogan