

27th October, 2008

Dnr 2810/08
Saknr 6821

Inquiry

Executive summary

A shipment with frozen Swedish pork femur bones from Scan AB establishment no. 81 in Skara, Sweden (Scan) and Skara Frys AB, establishment no. 452 in Skara, Sweden (Skara Frys) to Japan (certificate date 27th of June 2008) included one box of beef meat and one box of pork collar, which was not mentioned in the export certificate.

An inquiry by NFA verified that the two boxes were loaded together with the otherwise eligible shipment to Japan by mistake. The root causes of this error have been identified as (i) failure of Skara Frys to confirm that the contents of the picked and packed boxes matched the original packing order, and (ii) failure of Skara Frys to confirm that the number of the loaded boxes matched the original packing order.

As corrective actions, Skara Frys has developed and implemented new management controls in order to improve the picking, packing and dispatch controls. The routines have been improved and the employees responsible for handling the picking, packing and dispatch controls have been retrained. In addition hereto, Skara Frys has implemented new routines for the dispatch control in order to secure (i) that the loaded products in all parts correspond to the original packing order, and (ii) that the shipment will not include any ineligible products.

Purpose

The National Food Administration (NFA) has conducted an inquiry into the operations of Scan, establishment no. 81 and Skara Frys, establishment no. 452, in order to assess events surrounding inclusion in a shipment to Japan of one box of beef meat and one box of pork collar, not mentioned in the export certificate (export of beef is forbidden from Sweden to Japan).

Background

The export of meat from Sweden to other countries is supervised by the NFA. The Swedish meat industry is responsible for meeting all the food safety requirements in Sweden as well as any other requirements imposed by the importing country. The NFA is responsible for the inspection of slaughter, production and the certification of products exported to other countries. It is the exporting company that is responsible to check that the exported consignment fulfils the said requirements and the information in the export certificate matches the actual consignment. The signing export veterinarian duty is, however, to verify that these obligations have been fulfilled and to take all other measures, which the export veterinarian deems necessary in order to issue the export certificate.

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Results of inquiry

The NFA conducted an inquiry to determine whether the procedures and actions of Scan, establishment no. 81 and Skara Frys, establishment no. 452, complied with the Swedish export certificate requirements.

Results are as follows:

Export routines

The companies have described their export routines as follows: Products are produced at Scan and are transported to Skara Frys for storing regardless of external order. Upon receiving an external order Scan issues a packing order to Skara Frys. Skara Frys then picks and assembles the products in accordance with the packing order from Scan, arranges for the export veterinarian to issue the export certificate and orders a shipping company for dispatching the products.

Inclusion of ineligible boxes

According to the description of the product flow given by the companies, the procedures for loading at Skara Frys failed to prevent the inclusion of two non confirming boxes in a shipment of products otherwise eligible for export to Japan. The labels on the boxes have not been checked properly when picking and assembling the boxes and the dispatch control when the container was loaded has also failed in not noticing that there was a difference between the packing order and the dispatch order (the original packing order that was sent from Scan said 2400 boxes).

The export veterinarian has received the export certificate filled in by the company and has checked that the number of boxes confirmed with the number given on the certificate (which was 2402 boxes). The veterinarian has also made a visual inspection of the export consignment to check that the boxes were clean, not damaged and labelled according to legislation.

Corrective actions

Scan and Skara Frys have taken actions to correct conditions that caused or contributed to the export of ineligible products to Japan. The corrective actions have at first hand been directed to Skara Frys but Scan has also implemented corrective actions in order to prevent future failures.

Scan has identified the root causes of this shipping mistake as human errors that have occurred prior to and in connection with Skara Frys' loading of products for export to Japan.

Skara Frys has admitted that the human errors have occurred at its establishment during (i) picking and assembling of the products in accordance with Scan's original packing order and (ii) the dispatch control of the products before loading the products for export to Japan.

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New management controls have been developed and implemented by both Scan and Skara Frys.

- Skara Frys has improved the routines for and the instructions to the employees responsible for picking and assembling packing orders from Scan in order to assure that the original packing order from Scan in all parts complies with the dispatch order and the export certificate.

- Skara Frys has implemented new routines for the employees responsible for the dispatch control to the effect that every label on each box has to be scanned by handy-scanner and the result of the scanning of the labels has to be checked against the original packing from Scan and the dispatch order before loading. The result of the scanning of the labels will also be available for the export veterinarian stationed at Skara Frys to review before issuing the export certificate.

- Skara Frys has also appointed more personnel for handling loadings of products for export to Japan in order to secure the implementation of the improved routines mentioned above.

- Scan has improved its randomly control of the contents of the boxes before transporting them to Skara Frys for storage by increasing the boxes, which are opened in order to verify that the content corresponds to the labelling.

Conclusions

NFA conclusions from this inquiry are as follows:

The two boxes (one box of beef meat and one box of pork collar) not mentioned in the export certificate were not intended for export to Japan and one of the boxes (beef meat) did not comply with the import requirements of Japan.

The two boxes that were intended for the Swedish market had been inspected and were at the time of export a safe and wholesome product fit for consumption in Sweden.

All other boxes in the shipment contained meat that complies with the import requirement of Japan.

The NFA agrees with Scan and Skara Frys that the root cause for inclusion of these boxes in an export shipment to Japan was a plant-specific employee error that resulted in a failure to check that the packing order matched the dispatch order as well as a failure to check the labels at loading.

NATIONAL FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Food Control Department
International Trade Division
A Brådenmark

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NFA has reviewed the corrective actions taken by Scan and Skara Frys and finds them sufficient to address and resolve the root of this shipping mistake.

NFA is prepared to certify products from Scan for export to Japan immediately upon acknowledgement this report is accepted by MAFF.