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NZ Says Won't Ban US Beef On News Of Mad Cow Disease

DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

WELLINGTON (AP)--New Zealand agricultural authorities said Wednesday they saw no reason to place a ban on U.S. beef imports because of a suspected case of mad cow disease in the U.S.

Measures introduced to protect and monitor imports from North America when a case of mad cow disease was diagnosed in Canada in May were still in place, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture said in a joint statement.

"There is a great deal of cattle movement between Canada and the U.S. and we have been treating those populations as homogenous," the statement said.

Several nations, including Japan, South Korea, Australia and Taiwan, halted U.S. beef imports Wednesday just hours after the U.S. Agriculture Department announced that a cow on a farm in Washington state tested positive for the brain-wasting disease.

New Zealand authorities said the country imported few beef products from the U.S. and these were all assessed as low risk for transmitting the disease.

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The ministry said New Zealand remained BSE free and New Zealand cattle brains provided the international standard in testing for the disease.

-Edited By Kevin Lim

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