



INDEPENDENT CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS, INC.

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STATEMENT ON TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOREIGN BEEF AGREEMENT & REOPENING OF US SOUTHERN BORDER

Lockhart, TX — The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas (ICA) is extremely discouraged by the White House's agreement to import more than three hundred thousand metric tons of foreign beef to enter the United States on a tariff-free basis. Made official the same week the southern border was reopened.

American feedlots' growing dependence on cheaply raised Mexican cattle produced in a quasi-narco state, used to keep pens full and chase a profit margin or even a break-even, is an unsustainable market dynamic. It does not serve the American cattle producer or the American consumer.

American beef packing plants' aggressive pursuit of total integration and mass consolidation, a business model that depends almost entirely on foreign visa labor, is an unsustainable and dangerous market dynamic. It gives those firms dramatic leverage in the U.S. beef cattle marketplace and does not serve the American cattle producer, the American worker, or the American consumer.

American beef retailers' increasing dependence on foreign beef produced with cheaper labor, cheaper feed, and standards below those American cattle producers must meet is likewise unsustainable and dangerous. It does not serve the American cattle producer or the American consumer.

For the first time in nearly a decade, the United States saw an increase in heifer retention, reported by USDA on July 24th. That increase was a stop to the long erosion of American beef cattle herd numbers. Sound federal policy had created a fairer U.S. beef cattle market, resulting in healthier cattle prices, allowing producers to remain in business, and giving American cattle producers a chance to enter, re-enter, and expand.

Those policies included tariffs on foreign beef entering the United States and closing the southern border to live cattle imports.

The administration's reopening of the southern border to live cattle imports, coupled with the announced agreement to import three hundred thousand metric tons of foreign beef into the U.S. marketplace tariff-free, severely undermines the risks producers have taken to stay in the cattle business and pursue herd expansion. It undercuts the effort to restore the American beef cattle industry and achieve long-term consumer price stability.

The American beef consumer prefers quality American beef and a stable food-security system in the United States more than the chance of saving a few cents per pound in the short term, savings they will likely never see.

ICA membership is extremely discouraged by the news announced by the Trump administration over the last few days and urges the administration, in the strongest possible terms, to reverse course on these policies immediately.