

US: Cured pork meat ban to be relaxed

A ban that has been in place for decades in the US on cured meat from Italy, will be relaxed this month. The announcement by the USDA has caused much to celebrate, in both Italy and the US.



"This is a momentous event - one of the most important for the production and export of Italian salami and the result of 15 years of work," Italian industry association Assica said.

There are importers and producers alike in both countries that are pleased with the announcement as it means that cured meat will be now available in American homes. The relaxation on the ban will be effective as of 28 May this year.

However, some US cold-cuts producers are not showing complete eagerness, and despite a reduction in the threat of swine vesicular disease, "Italian producers will still have to meet USDA guidelines for listeria, salmonella and E. coli," said Marc Buzzio, the president of Salumeria Biellese.

The USDA has said that the regions: Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Piemonte and the northern provinces of Trento and Bolzano are free of swine vesicular disease (SVD) - a dangerous disease that infects pigs and one of the health concerns that fueled the cured meats ban. It has been stated that authorities are satisfied that the safety measures being carried out by the Italian government in these areas will stop any possible spread of the disease to the US.

Since the 70s

The ban has been in place since the 1970s, it was as a result of a string of European livestock illnesses, say media reports. Since then, the USDA has only allowed the importation of some cured pork products from producers that pay a big certification fee. Currently, only about half of Italy's cold cuts are given the green light for import to the United States, according to Italy's Association of Meat and Cold Cuts Producers.

Up until now, only seasoned ham like Parma and San Daniele, cooked ham or

mortadella were exported from Italy however it's still not exactly clear which kind of meats will appear in the US in the coming months, but meats like culatello, pancetta, coppa and salami may be on the list heading for American tables.

by Pig Progress May 3, 2013