

CANADA-KOREA AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: A SUMMARY

DEHYDRATED ALFALFA

Canadian dehydrated alfalfa products, pellets in particular, are used as a component in feed concentrate, replacing grain and other imported protein meals, not primarily as a source of roughage. Pellets have also been known to dramatically improve the palatability of native grasses and forages. Dehydrated alfalfa can be used to complement locally grown forages, not replace them.

As a result of continued pressure by Canada, the Korean government recently announced, effective July 1, 1991, the reduction of the alfalfa tariff from 15% to 10% and an expansion of its import quota from about 60,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes. This is a welcome move, although it still leaves alfalfa with a higher tariff than competing feedstuffs, which are subject to tariffs in the 3-5% range.

BEEF

As a result of the GATT finding that Korean import quotas on beef were inconsistent with its international obligations, Korea undertook to eliminate its beef quotas by 1997. The Canadian Beef Exporters Federation and the Government of Alberta have targeted Korea as a market of opportunity. While Canada's beef exports rose to over 2000 tonnes in 1989, they declined in 1990, due to a shortage of beef in Canada. Procedures now in place have dramatically improved access for Canadian beef.

BARLEY

Korea effectively prohibits the importation of Canadian barley for animal feed. Barley is a traditional food grain in Korea and the government is concerned that animal feed-grain barley could be diverted to human use at great profit for the importer and at great expense to Korean farmers. Repeated assurances that Canadian barley could be rendered unfit for human consumption go unheeded. Korea does not discriminate against corn from the USA in a similar fashion even though they have domestic corn production and the purpose for which corn is imported (feed) is the same as barley.

The resolution of this issue appears to be long-term, requiring an educational/marketing approach by the Canadian Wheat Board, supported by representations by Canadian government officials at both the technical and political level.