

# SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

FOOD

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## US BEEF IN TAIWAN WITHDRAW AFTER RACTOPAMINE CONTAMINATION

On January 16, 2010 Taiwan department of Health (DOH) found Paylean or Ractopamine residue at the level of 0.64 – 2.84 ppb (part per billion) in US-imported beef. Taiwan's regulation prohibits the use of Paylean in imported and domestic meat. Therefore, US beef was removed from shelves of hypermarket and local market immediately and DOH decided to increase the rate of inspection of beef product from 5 percent to 20 percent<sup>1,2</sup>.

Beta-agonists are the group of drugs which consist of several compounds such as clenbuterol, salbuterol, mabuterol, ractopamine and zilpaterol. These drugs are used originally for therapeutic treatment of asthma and preterm labor in human. However, Beta-agonists are also misused as growth promoters in livestock by diverting fat deposits to muscle tissue. This misuse had caused a potential risk for consumer health, mainly in persons with asthma or cardiac problems. Beta-agonists are banned in China and European Union (EU) while the USA, South Africa, and Mexico allow the use ractopamine and zilpaterol as growth promoters<sup>3</sup>. EU has established maximum residue level (MRLs) of clenbuterol at 0.1 µg/kg in muscle of bovine and equidae; 0.5 µg/kg in liver and kidney of bovine and equidae and 0.05 for bovine milk<sup>4</sup>.



For the MRLs of ractopamine, this compound has been considered and held at step 8 in the session by Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) since 2008 because of a disagreement from EU and China about the MRLs of ractopamine at the level 10 µg/kg in meat products. The reason for the disagreement is insufficient risk assessment data. As no consensus could be reached, CAC accepted the proposal of the Chairperson to select a "Friend of the Chair" who will work to propose the possible risk management solution at the next CAC session in 2011.

Throughout SGS global network, we have the capability to test Beta-agonists residue in meat products at below MRLs level of EU regulation by using, state-of-the-art high resolution instrument, liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS). This instrument is used to confirm the presence of these analytes in sample according to Commission Decision 2002/657 EC. If you need more information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

<sup>1</sup> [Taiwan Refuses to Reconsider Paylean Ban](#)

<sup>2</sup> [DOH lifts inspection rate for North American beef](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Maximum Residue Limits \(MRLs\) for ractopamine](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Committee for Veterinary Medicinal products Clenbuterol Summary Report \(2\)](#)

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