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<p>Trade Policy Committee</p>	
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NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE TRADE POLICY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: **Information about the formal decision of GCC ministers to lift the BSE import ban on live bovines from "risk controlled countries"**

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OBJECTIVE: For information

REMARKS: The Commission welcomes the formal decision by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to lift the import ban on live bovines from countries which pose a "controlled risk" of

transmitting *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy* (BSE). The annexed minutes (English and Arabic) of the 23rd ministerial meeting of the Agriculture Cooperation Committee of the GCC, held in Riyadh on 16 June 2012, were received by the EU Delegation in Riyadh on 26 November 2012 and provide additional information.

The Commission understands that:

- a) The lifting of this import ban was taken at ministerial level, in one of the several GCC committees;
- b) Specific import conditions are (normally) set at the level of the competent authorities in GCC countries. They are responsible to transpose this type of formal GCC ministerial decisions;
- c) In the same GCC country, different authorities may regulate different aspects of imports, i.e. one authority for live animals (linked to the lifting of the ban), and another one for animal products (not directly affected, according to some GCC countries, by the ban and by the lifting of the ban);
- d) The lifting of the import ban does not cover bovine products, such as deboned meat.

The EU Delegation in Riyadh and the European Commission in Brussels will continue working towards a full alignment of all GCC import conditions with the OIE requirements, including those applicable to safe commodities, like deboned meat – to which, according to the OIE, no conditions should be required.

EU Member States are encouraged to test the market in these countries and to share any relevant information, including copies of the import conditions of the GCC countries and any problem related to the exports of bovines or their products to GCC countries.