

Indonesia keeps US beef ban amid mad cow fears

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Indonesia will not lift a ban on certain US beef imports until the United States declares the products free from mad cow disease, the agriculture ministry said Tuesday.

Indonesia suspended US imports of boned meat and [innards](#) on April 26, two days after the fourth-ever case in the US of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, known as mad cow disease, was reported in California.

"The US government has yet to overcome the problem. It hasn't given us assurance that the products are disease-free," Indonesia's agriculture minister Suswono told reporters.

"I have received a letter from the US agriculture ministry that explains they are taking the necessary actions to solve the problem, but we also need to wait for our expert commission to give clearance," he said.

No case of [mad cow disease](#) has ever been reported in Indonesia.

US beef accounts for around seven percent of the country's imports of the meat, ministry data shows.

[Indonesia](#) imported around 18,000 tonnes of beef worth \$28.2 million from the United States in 2011, according to the US Meat Export Federation, and has imported 1,027 tonnes from the United States so far this year.

Australia and New Zealand supply the bulk of the country's beef imports, which reached 100,000 tonnes last year.

Beef innards such as liver, kidney, heart and intestines, are widely used in Indonesian cuisine but prime-cut boneless [meat](#) accounts for a large part of US beef imports.

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