

[BAI MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 16, August 15, 2005]

IMPORTATION OF FULLY TANNED LEATHER FROM ALL COUNTRIES

WHEREAS, the Philippines has an existing ban on the importation of animal, animal products and by-products (including tanned leather for industrial purposes) of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) susceptible animals from FMD-infected countries;

WHEREAS, due to the lower cost and consistency of supply of tanned leather, importers source their tanned leather from countries not declared FMD free such as China and India;

WHEREAS, processed leather can still transmit diseases, such as anthrax among others;

WHEREAS, the Philippines imports shoes, bags and other leather (that has the same stage of processing conducted on fully tanned leather) products from all countries regardless of their disease status;

WHEREAS, most of the importers of tanned leather process the imported leather into finished products such as bags, shoes, seat cover, gloves and jackets for export purposes;

WHEREAS, as per OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, the Veterinary Administration can authorize the importation of hides and skin of domestic or wild ruminants and pigs from FMD infected countries without restriction, provided that these products have been submitted to the usual chemical and mechanical processes in use in the tanning industry.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture do hereby issue this Order allowing the importation of fully tanned leather from all countries subject to the following conditions:

1. All importations of tanned leather shall be covered by the Veterinary Quarantine Clearance (VQC) to import;
2. The products have been processed to ensure the destruction of disease causing organism;
3. The necessary precautions were taken after the processing to avoid contact of the products with any potential source of infectious agent;
4. All importation of tanned leather without necessary VQC to import shall be subject to seizure and confiscation of re-exportation.

This Order shall take effect immediately.