

Ranch Group Supports New Tariffs; Wants More

BILLINGS, Mont., March 4, 2025 – In a YouTube video published today [4], ranch group R-CALF USA explains its strong support for the 25% tariffs President Trump imposed today on imports from Canada and Mexico.

But the group goes even further to request similar tariffs on beef imports from Australia, New Zealand and South America, and it wants tariffs and tariff rate quotas on mutton and lamb meat imported from Australia and New Zealand.

As explained by R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard, the theory and practice of free trade, as exemplified by zero tariffs, has all but destroyed the United States commercial sheep industry and is causing the rapid contraction of the domestic beef supply chain.

He said foreign countries have an inherent pricing advantage over domestic producers due to lower wage rates, lower production standards, relaxed environmental standards, and weaker currencies. According to Bullard, those factors enable global importers to leverage down domestic producer prices, which results in the dismantling of domestic food supply chains and displacement of domestic production with cheaper imports.

This, he said, threatens United States food security by forcing American consumers to become more and more dependent on foreign supply chains for their food.

Bullard said the zero tariff regime over the past few decades has forced hundreds of thousands of domestic cattle and sheep operations out of business, has reduced U.S. cattle and sheep inventories by millions of head, and has reduced the number of marketing outlets available to domestic producers.

He explained that non-global, domestic lamb packing plants are struggling to survive because there are not enough domestic lambs available to keep their packing plants running at economical levels.



Rhetorically, he asked why the U.S. cattle industry was not in an expansion phase given the historically high prices producers are receiving for their cattle. His reasoning is that the reduction in the size of the U.S. cattle herd, though accelerated by the recent widespread drought, was actually caused by prolonged periods of depressed prices, reduced cattle grazing on federally managed rangeland, and rising imports. Citing the historical cattle cycle as evidence, he explained that the U.S. cattle herd has been on a downward trajectory for decades.

Pointing to the record level of beef imports in 2024, which he said were more than 37% higher than the previous five-year average, Bullard makes the case that increased consumer demand for both beef and lamb were being satisfied by cheaper global imports.

“We can no longer pretend that our domestic cattle and sheep industries will somehow prosper when global importers are continually allowed to leverage down domestic livestock prices by satisfying increased consumer demand for beef and lamb with cheaper imports. This is a recipe for weakening

America’s food security.”

“America needs more cattle and sheep farmers and ranchers and more cattle and sheep. Tariffs and tariff rate quotas are the economic tool that will incentivize domestic market forces to make this happen.” he said.

“We appreciate the new tariffs that President Trump has enacted and we’re hopeful this is just a start. We’re asking the president to implement additional tariffs and tariff rate quotas on imports of beef, mutton and lamb from around the world, including from Australia, New Zealand, and South America,” Bullard added.

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Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) is the largest producer-only lobbying and trade association representing U.S. cattle producers. It is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the continued profitability and viability of the U.S. cattle and sheep industries. For more information, visit www.r-calfusa.com [5] or call 406-252-2516. 📞