



AS IT IS

Taiwan Hopes Pork Deal Will Lead to Bigger US Trade Agreement

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Taiwanese officials will lift a ban on pig meat imports from the United States. Taiwan's parliament gave the final approval to the move last week.

Most American pigs are raised with the food additive ractopamine. An additive is something that is given, or added to the food an animal eats.

Ractopamine is used to cause **leanness** in the pig's meat, called pork. But the additive is banned by 160 countries, including China, Russia and the European Union.

The imports will begin Friday. They remove what Taiwanese officials believe to be an important barrier in U.S. trade ties.

Freddy Lim is a Taiwanese lawmaker. He said recently, "When I've made...visits to the United States, the U.S. representatives would always bring up this **topic**, and now this issue that kept being brought up is out of the way."

Lim said he felt optimistic, or good, given past experiences and reactions.

International Trade

Officials in Taiwan have tried since 1994 for a free trade deal with the United States.

Liu Yih-jiun is a public affairs professor at Fo Guang University in Taiwan. Liu recently said that Taiwan has "to fully **engage** into active international trade with foreign countries."

Taiwan Premier Su Tseng-chang told parliament in November that the United States was Taiwan's most powerful ally. He also explained that his government would require inspections at American meat factories and clear product **labeling** to protect food safety. Until now, Taiwan has avoided American pork because of the idea that ractopamine could be linked to human health problems.

Government-operated Central News Agency reported in November that lifting the ban could help support efforts for a trade deal with the United States.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen announced in August the possibility of letting in American pork. U.S. officials answered saying Tsai's decision would "open the door to greater economic and trade cooperation between the United States and Taiwan."

No guarantee of a deal

The U.S. Trade Representative's office has not said Taiwan must permit pork imports to **qualify** for a trade deal, minority party lawmaker Charles Chen said.

"I think this matter raises major doubts among Taiwanese **domestically** about whether there will be any sort of exchange with the U.S. Trade Representative office," Chen said. "If not, then it doesn't mean that the trade representative will give us any **advantages**." Chen's opposition Nationalist Party notably opposed the deal.

I'm John Russell.

Ralph Jennings reported on this story for VOA. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor. _____

Words in This Story

leanness – *n.* the quality of not having much fat on the body : physically thin, strong, and healthy

topic – *n.* someone or something that people talk or write about

label – *v.* to put a word or name on something to describe or identify it : to attach a label to (something)

engage – *v.* to become involved in something

qualify – *v.* to give (someone) the right to do, have, or be a part of something

advantage – *n.* something (such as a good position or condition) that helps to make someone or something better or more likely to succeed than others
