



***Commonwealth of Virginia***  
***Office of Governor Bob McDonnell***

**Governor McDonnell Announces First Ever Direct  
Export of Virginia Holstein Bulls to Russia**

*~ Deal Marks Continued Effort to Help Virginia Farmers Find New  
Export Markets ~*

**RICHMOND** – Governor Bob McDonnell today announced that the first ever direct export of Virginia Holstein bulls to Russia has been completed. Vistar Farms of Mechanicsville, working in partnership with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) international marketing staff, arranged the export shipment to the Russian port city of Novorossiysk. Financial details of the initial sale were private, but the export deal is significant as it marks Virginia’s entry into Russia’s growing market for cattle and genetics imports.

“I have made increasing agricultural exports from Virginia a key component of my administration’s overall economic development and job creation plans,” said McDonnell, who has included an amendment to his proposed budget to the General Assembly that provides additional funds to market and promote Virginia agricultural products in the global marketplace. “Opening new markets for our high quality and diversified portfolio of agricultural products is important for current farm profitability and future growth and prosperity. I’m pleased that Virginia’s dairy cattle industry has finally entered Russia, already one of Virginia’s top agricultural export markets.”

Despite the lack of cattle exports, Russia was Virginia’s ninth largest agricultural export customer in 2010 with just under \$60 million in products. Russia has allowed the importation of U.S. cattle since 2008 when the two countries reached an import protocol agreement. In addition to Vistar’s and VDACS’ work with the Russian importer, the initial shipment from Virginia took the combined effort of other state and federal partners to ensure that the transaction was completed successfully. The Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture helped expedite export documents. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality managed the certification process that allowed the bulls to be quarantined before shipment per protocol specifications.

Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Todd P. Haymore added, "This deal is a good match for Virginia dairy cattle exporters and Russian importers. Virginia's dairy industry is known internationally for producing high quality genetics, and Russia is rapidly becoming one of the most active markets for live cattle exports. We expect additional export sales to Russia in the coming months, further building relationships between Virginia exporters and Russia importers and solidifying what we hope becomes a new and successful long-term export market."

The Russian market for live animal imports is growing, and is currently valued at more than \$300 million annually. In 2009, Russia imported 35,000 live cattle and in 2010 the number rose to 38,000. Last year, Russia imported approximately 55,000 live cattle, with Russian buyers finding quality animals being offered from new U.S. suppliers. After the protocol was established to begin exporting live cattle to Russia in 2008, the U.S. now accounts for approximately \$10 million of live cattle business in Russia.

Agriculture and forestry are Virginia's largest industries, with a combined economic impact of \$79 billion annually: \$55 billion from agriculture and \$24 billion from forestry. The industries also provide approximately 500,000 jobs in the Commonwealth according to the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.