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Novosibirsk Lifts Quarantine That Triggered Mass Cattle Culls

June 12, 2026



Kirill Kukhmar / TASS

Authorities in the Novosibirsk region have lifted quarantine measures over what they claimed as an "unusual" form of an infectious disease that in part triggered government-enforced mass cattle culls earlier this year.

Around 90,000 cattle were culled across nine Russian regions, including Novosibirsk, between February and March. Russian officials blamed the drastic measures on rabies and an "unusual mutated form" of pasteurellosis.

In Novosibirsk alone, analysts estimate half of the 6,800 cattle on affected farms were slaughtered, resulting in losses exceeding 235 million rubles ($3.1 million).

"All quarantine restrictions previously introduced due to an infectious disease among livestock have been officially lifted," the regional agriculture ministry announced Friday.

The head of its veterinary department said beef, other animal meat and products that have

cleared veterinary inspection could now be sold freely throughout the Novosibirsk region.

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The ministry also allowed for the transportation of livestock across the region under the close supervision of veterinary specialists.

The unhindered transportation and sale of live animals and animal products outside the Novosibirsk region will be allowed after the veterinary specialists restore its health status.

Despite the authorities' claims, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's foreign service suggested the culls may have actually been a response to an unconfirmed outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, a highly contagious and often fatal virus. That theory gained traction after Kazakhstan banned imports of Russian meat and livestock.

Russia's agriculture watchdog has dismissed the allegation.

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