

## **Peru Cattle Ranchers March To Protest Free Trade Pact**

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LIMA (AP)--Hundreds of cattle ranchers marched on Congress with their cows to protest Peru's decision to join pacts between South America's two largest trading blocs aimed at gradually creating a free trade zone across the continent.

"What the government has done is a betrayal," Fernando Bravo, president of Peru's National Cattlemen's Front, said, referring to accords signed Oct. 18 in Uruguay between the Andean Community and the Mercosur union that pave the way for a gradual creation of a free trade zone across the continent.

"They signed a deal with Mercosur without talking to the cattlemen, behind the cattlemen's backs," Bravo said.

He said a free trade deal would devastate his industry by creating enormous trade imbalances between Peru, which has only about 4.5 million head of cattle, and Brazil and Argentina, which have 171 million and 85 million, respectively.

Mercosur's head, Eduardo Duhalde, on Sunday announced a summit with South American leaders in December where they will discuss the creation of the new bloc.

Talks between the Mercosur and the Andean Community have been taking place for months. But there had been reports of disagreements - particularly in the agricultural sector - impeding final agreements.

Mercosur's main members are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, covering the eastern half of the continent. Peru and Bolivia are associate members of the group.

The Andean Community group, is comprised of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela.