

Groups Issue Statement Regarding Efforts To Prevent BSE In U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The following statement was recently issued by several breed associations and processor groups regarding efforts to prevent BSE in the U.S.:

"As representatives of cattle producers, feed manufacturers, renderers, processors and veterinarians, we reaffirm our commitment to effective implementation

and enforcement of sound, science-based measures to prevent the BSE agent from entering the United States. This includes import restrictions, feed bans, and active surveillance.

"Active surveillance in the U.S. has not revealed a single case of BSE. BSE regulations have a firm scientific foundation. They reflect the wisdom of careful consideration and open de-

bate. Surveillance and enforcement in the U.S. have been vigilant.

"Three components of BSE prevention that should remain the highest priority of industry and government are:

"1) Strict enforcement of import restrictions designed to keep the BSE agent out of the U.S.,

"2) Achieve 100% compliance with the FDA feed ban, and

"3) Continued support for active USDA BSE surveillance in the U.S.

"We pledge our continued vigilance and commitment to BSE prevention in the U.S."

Statement By:

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Veterinary

Medical Association
American Meat Institute
National Meat Association
National Renderers Association
North American Meat Processors Association
National Milk Producers Federation
American Farm Bureau Federation
National Grain and Feed Association

NCBA Posts BSE Information, Statement

DENVER, Colo. — Recently Chuck Schroeder, CEO National Cattlemen's Beef Association, posted a report regarding BSE and the U.S. cattle industry.

"Recent reports indicate that a Texas feed mill may have inadvertently mixed in meat and bone meal derived from U.S. cattle with a feed supplement which later was fed to some cattle. It is important to understand this is a compliance issue, not a safety issue. There has never been a case of BSE found in the U.S.

"The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) supports full compliance with FDA regulations that prohibit the feeding of mammalian-derived protein supplements that might be a risk for carrying the BSE infectious agent. We have made it clear to the feed industry and the rendering industry from the start that we expect full compliance. If there are violations of the law - whether purposeful or accidental - NCBA expects these to be dealt

with according to law.

"If there are folks within the industry who don't understand the seriousness of the situation, they need to be brought to understand it — both by communication from the industry and if necessary by penalties from the regulatory authorities involved. There is simply no excuse for non-compliance. As an industry, we are unwavering on that.

"This is not a safety issue because the meat and bone meal in question originated in the U.S., and there has never been a case of BSE found here. The FDA feed regulation ban is a critical firewall measure and was implemented as an extra precaution.

"While BSE is not found in the U.S., the feed ban assures that if BSE somehow ever did get into this country, it would not spread and could be quickly isolated and eradicated. It should be noted that just feeding mammal-derived proteins to cattle does not in and of itself cause BSE.

BSE is only spread through feed if that feed is contaminated with the BSE infectious agent.

"The BSE agent only has been found in central nervous system tissue including brain, spinal cord and retinal tissues. The BSE infectious agent has never been found in muscle meat, which is the principle way beef is consumed in the American diet."

Background Information

Because NCBA views compliance with the FDA feed regulation as a top priority, the organization hosted a meeting in Washington, D.C., on Monday to discuss this issue.

Planning for the meeting began last November. NCBA invited officials of the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the feed industry and the meatpacking and rendering industries to the meeting to discuss

ensuring full compliance with the FDA rule.

This meeting was timely, given the situation with the Texas feed mill. The mill discovered the potential mistake and notified the feed yard. The feed yard then ceased to use the supplement in question.

The cattle fed the supplement have been identified and are being voluntarily held pending FDA's testing of feed samples. FDA expects to have the results of these tests early next week and will determine if meat and bone meal is present and, if so, in an

amount sufficient to be of consequence.

The issue, reported Schroeder, is not a safety issue. Ten years of USDA surveillance and testing of suspicious cattle has never found BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) or any similar disease in U.S. cattle. It is a regulatory/compliance issue, and as such, FDA is taking action.

For current information on BSE, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and new variant CJD, visit NCBA's scientifically reviewed information resource at www.bseinfo.org.

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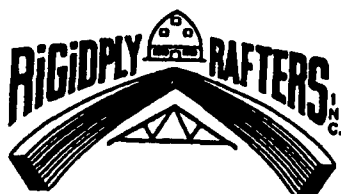
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