

12/24/2003 Entry: "R-CALF USA Response to BSE"

Dear R-CALF USA Affiliates,

A single, older Holstein cow from the state of Washington, which was a downer cow at rendering, tested presumptively positive for BSE. The presumptive positive result came from two separate United States tests. Samples of the cow are now being flown to the international lab in England for final testing and confirmation.

The actual age and origin of the cow is unknown at this point.

It is not known if the meat from the cow made it to the food chain.

USDA says this is not terrorist related, nor is it related to the high level of security alert.

According to the updated Harvard Risk Assessment, if BSE is introduced in the U.S., the risk of spreading is very low.

USDA is doing a trace-back of the origin of the animal and a trace-forward to determine where the meat from the cow went.

Remember, we're not export dependent as is Canada. If U.S. consumer confidence is maintained as it was maintained in Canada, the U.S. live cattle industry will not be subject to the same degree of loss as Canada experienced.

We must await the results of APHIS's investigation to be sure we have all the facts.

Attached is a copy of the United State's BSE Response Plan that has been put in force today.

We'll keep you informed.

Bill