

## **05/18/2002 Entry: "R-CALF USA United Stockgrowers of America"**

For Immediate Release Contact John Lockie  
April 22, 2002 406-252-2516 johnlockie@r-calfusa.com

**UK Citizen in U.S. has Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease**  
(Billings, MT) A 22 year-old citizen of the United Kingdom, living in Florida, has been diagnosed with new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD), which has been linked to new variant Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (vBSE), also known as Mad Cow Disease. The woman lived in the United Kingdom during the height of that country's vBSE epidemic.

According to the Associated Press, the woman was diagnosed with vCJD in the United Kingdom recently, but is now living with her family in Florida. According to the Florida Department of Health, there is no danger of the disease infecting other U.S. consumers or U.S. cattle. However, the U.S. commodity market reacted negatively to the announcement of the woman living in the U.S., which reinforces concerns that our commodity and futures markets are being manipulated.

Danni Beer of Keldron, SD, chair of the R-CALF USA (United Stockgrowers of America) Country of Origin Labeling Committee, said, "Obviously if the industry had country of origin labeling, this announcement would not have had the impact on our markets that we saw last Friday." R-CALF USA has championed mandatory country of origin labeling that defines U.S. beef as being derived from cattle exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the U.S.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson said, "It is critical, especially after the September 11th terrorist attacks, that we identify the source of all food our people eat in order to protect the integrity of our food supply." The Florida Department of Agriculture has successfully implemented and labeled the country of origin of all fruits and vegetables sold in Florida for over 20 years.

The U.S. Senate and House Agriculture Conference Committee is currently discussing the differences in their proposals for the 2002 Farm Bill. The original Senate version of the farm bill provides for mandatory country of origin labeling, but is meeting resistance from beef industry organizations. "For too long, importers of cattle and beef have circumvented their responsibility in a sound food tracking system. Currently, members of the House Conference Committee are attempting to make country of origin labeling VOLUNTARY instead of mandatory, even though the U.S. has had access to voluntary labeling for years and it has not been used," said Beer.

"To allay fear of diseases such as BSE, country of origin labeling must be passed so consumers may choose between foreign or domestic beef for their families.

The U.S. has never had BSE; it is unclear why the U.S. has not capitalized on these merits by differentiating the products to the consumer,” said Beer.

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R-CALF USA is a national cattle association representing U.S. cattle producers in trade and marketing issues. It represents independent cattle producers in 40 states and has 28 state and local cattle association affiliates. For more information, visit [www.rcalf.com](http://www.rcalf.com).