

12/30/2003 Entry: "Steps to Further Protect Food Safety Following BSE Case in Washington State"

Dear R-CALF USA Members and Affiliates:

Today the USDA Announced the Following Steps to Further Protect Food Safety Following the BSE Case in Washington State:

1. Effective immediately USDA will ban all downer animals from the human food chain.
2. More testing will be conducted and carcasses from animals subject to testing will be held from the food chain until test results are known.
3. USDA will implement new regulations to address Specified Risk Materials (SRMs) or high risk materials.
 - a. USDA is declaring all high risk materials from cattle over 30 months as high risk and unfit for human consumption. This includes:
 - i. Brains and spinal tissue
 - ii. Tonsils and small intestines
 - iii. Skull material
4. USDA will issue more regulations on the use of Automatic Meat Recovery (AMR) systems. These regulations will ensure, through testing, that no spinal column or dorsal root ganglia material is found on food. These regulations will take effect immediately upon publication.
5. USDA will issue regulations prohibiting the use of air stunning devices on cattle.
6. USDA will take the next step to implement a verifiable system of national animal identification, a nationwide animal identification system. It will be a top priority to implement an effective and verifiable system of animal identification.
7. USDA will appoint an international panel of scientific experts to review USDA's investigation of this BSE case.

More information will follow

Bill Bullard