



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the US Beef Supply Part 2**

Last week the recent events, which have brought BSE and the US Beef, supply into the news was reviewed. The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) over the years has taken many steps to keep the US Beef supply safe. It has restricted the importation of live ruminants, such as cows and sheep, and most food products from these animals for BSE countries since 1989 and from all European countries since 1997. It is important for consumers to know that:

- In 1990, the United States became the first country without BSE within its borders to test cattle for the disease. The BSE surveillance program has mandated that all cattle with any signs of neurological disorder be tested for BSE and banned from the human food chain. Since 1990, meat from cattle showing signs of neurological disorder has not been processed for human consumption.
- No meat products from ruminant animals from the 33 countries identified as having BSE or at risk for having BSE are allowed in the U.S. This includes meat products used in human, animal, and pet foods. Milk and milk products are not believed to pose any risk for transmitting BSE to humans. Experiments have shown that milk from BSE-infected cows has not caused infections in the same species or in other test animals.
- Under an Import Alert, FDA stops cosmetic and dietary supplement ingredients containing bovine materials from animals originating in the 33 countries where BSE has been found or is a risk for being found from entering the U.S.

On January 8, 2004, USDA Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced new regulations to protect the US meat supply against BSE.

**PRODUCT HOLDING** - Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors are no longer marking cattle tested for BSE as "inspected and passed" until confirmation is received that the cattle have tested negative for BSE. FSIS will be issuing a directive to inspection program personnel outlining this policy.

**SPECIFIED RISK MATERIAL** - FSIS is declaring that skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia, eyes, vertebral column, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia of cattle 30 months of age or older and the distal ileum of the small intestine of all cattle are specified risk materials (SRMs), thereby prohibiting their use in the human food supply. Tonsils from all cattle are already considered inedible and do not enter the food supply. These enhancements are consistent with the actions taken by Canada after the discovery of BSE there in May, and become effective immediately upon publication in the Federal Register.

FSIS is requiring federally inspected establishments that slaughter cattle to remove, segregate and dispose of these SRMs so that they cannot possibly enter the food chain. To facilitate the enforcement of this rule, FSIS has developed procedures for verifying the approximate age of cattle that are slaughtered in official

establishments. State inspected plants must have equivalent procedures in place to prevent these SRMs from entering the food supply

**ADVANCED MEAT RECOVERY - AMR**, a technology that removes muscle tissue from the bone of beef carcasses under high pressure without incorporating bone material, supplies products that can be labeled as “meat.” FSIS previously established and enforced regulations that prohibit spinal cord from being included in products labeled as “meat.” This interim final rule expands that prohibition of spinal cord in AMR meat to also include dorsal root ganglia, clusters of nerve cells connected to the spinal cord along the vertebral column. As the vertebral column and skull in cattle 30 months and older will be considered inedible, they are not to be used for AMR.

**AIR-INJECTION STUNNING** - To ensure that portions of the brain are not dislocated into the tissues of the carcass as a consequence of humanely stunning cattle during the slaughter process, FSIS is issuing an interim final rule to ban the practice of air-injection stunning.

The expectation is that these rules were published in the Federal Register on Monday, January 12, 2004. The rules became effective immediately upon publication. Visit <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/> for more information.

*Source: FDA: Consumer Questions and Answers About BSE, <http://www.fda.gov/>*