

The Cattlemen's Newsletter

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Our Mission...

R-CALF USA's mission is to represent the U.S. cattle industry in trade and marketing issues to ensure the continued profitability and viability of independent U.S. cattle producers.

R-CALF USA: USDA describes ear tag in BSE cow

BILLINGS, MT (Dec. 28, 2003) On day five of the investigation of the Holstein cow infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Dr. Ron DeHaven, Chief Veterinarian for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), announced that the finding that the BSE infected cow was imported from Canada in 2001 is preliminary. He said the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has indicated that semen from the sire of the infected cow, along with a calf of the infected cow born in Canada has been identified and will be used to perform the DNA tests needed to confirm if the cow originated in Canada.

In response to a reporter's question regarding the kind of ear tag that was in the infected cow's ear, Dr. DeHaven described it as a small, silver colored metal tag that was intended for one-time use with two sides of the tag crimped together. He said the tag itself suggested it had been applied in Canada and was of Canadian origin.

R-CALF USA President Leo McDonnell said the difficulty in confirming whether or not the infected cow was of foreign origin would not be a problem if USDA and Congress had adopted the cattle industry's recommendation that cattle be delisted from the so-called J-list that presently exempts cattle from the general requirement of the Tariff Act of 1930 to mark all imported products,

including livestock with a mark of origin. "We've been continuously asking USDA and Congress to take this important step so the country of origin of live animals can be readily determined at the point of slaughter," he said.

McDonnell suggested that in the future all factual information related to an investigation such as this should be released to the industry as soon as it is available, even if a final interpretation of the information cannot be confirmed. "This factual information would allow markets to react more responsibly and would prevent the volatility associated with complete uncertainty," he said, adding, "It is difficult to say whether our trading partners would have refrained from closing their borders so quickly if they had known there was a likelihood that the infected cow was imported rather than being a native cow." McDonnell said the distinction between a native case of BSE versus an imported case of BSE is significant under the health safety standards established by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

McDonnell praised USDA's announcement that the United States' overall BSE program will now be re-evaluated based on this current case and that appropriate changes will be made either

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R-CALF USA pleased with OIE's scientific determination of nations' BSE risk status

BILLINGS, MT (Dec. 23, 2003) R-CALF USA C.E.O. Bill Bullard returned from the first meeting organized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) between the United States cattle and beef industries and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in Paris, France. Joined by beef industry representatives from the National Meat Association, American Meat Foundation, American Meat Institute, Meat Export Federation, and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Bullard participated in meetings with officials from APHIS, the OIE, a French packing plant, French cattle producers, and French government officials December 15-16, 2003 in Paris and Le Mans, France.

Bullard said the outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in France and other European countries motivated the European Union (EU) to adopt

sophisticated mandatory animal identification and country of origin labeling systems. The EU has developed an animal "passport" system requiring individual passports for all livestock, which passports are associated with identical, bar-coded ear tags in both ears of cattle. The system provides information regarding the country in which the animal was born, raised, and slaughtered as well as the animal's breed, age, and sex. "The French producers told us that member countries in the EU are using the mandatory labeling system as a competitive tool to build consumer loyalty for beef born and raised in their respective country," said Bullard.

"It was interesting to learn that, while the European Union has adopted a standardized animal identification system used by all member countries, individual member countries are free to

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Request by U.S. cattle industry to mitigate potential impacts of suspected BSE case

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Ann Veneman
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Sent via e-mail and facsimile on Dec. 23, 2003

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Motivation behind COOL attacks related to profits, not program cost

BILLINGS, MT (Dec. 5, 2003) In response to the meatpacking industry's claim that voluntary country of origin labeling will cost less than mandatory labeling (COOL), R-CALF USA COOL Committee Chair Danni Beer said, "Yes, voluntary COOL will cost less because fewer commodities would be labeled. We know this to be true because we've had a voluntary labeling program administered by the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) since the 1970s, and packers and retailers have clearly demonstrated their disdain for labeling by choosing not to participate in a voluntary program."

Beer said COOL opponents are being disingenuous to U.S. producers and consumers, citing the opponents' argument that American consumers don't want COOL while they simultaneously argue that COOL does not go far enough because the restaurant trade is not included. "Despite their

conflicting arguments, these same groups claim to support a voluntary program. This should send a strong signal to producers and consumers about the real motives of those who claim to only support a voluntary COOL program," she said.

"And their real motives are obvious," stated Beer. "Opponents are not attacking COOL because of cost of implementation." Beer continued, "They are attacking COOL because it is far more profitable for packers and retailers to disguise the origins of beef than it is to allow consumers to express their preference for beef grown in a particular country."

She said COOL opponents have further attacked COOL because the law does not allow for a mandatory animal identification system for use in source verifying live animals. "These groups want

a mandatory animal identification system and they're misusing the COOL law to get it implemented." Beer explained, however, that the animal identification system currently under discussion would deliver no information to consumers about where products were born or raised so there would be no noticeable benefits for consumers at the meat counter.

According to Beer, a mandatory animal identification system would be far more expensive for producers than mandatory COOL. "In fact," Beer said, "Texas A&M Professor Ernie Davis estimated the producer cost of COOL implementation with a permanent animal identification system would be over \$15 per head for cattle. This is 730 percent more than the University of Florida's estimated producer-cost of implementing COOL without animal identification."

Director nominations needed for regions VII, VIII, and IX

The directorships in regions VII, VIII, and IX are open for nominations. Directors serve a three-year term and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Nominees must be current members and cattle producers within the region they are running for directorship. Nominees may submit their names and a short bio to the national office or at convention.

Region VII consists of Minnesota, Iowa, Wis-

consin, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. The current director of Region VII is Jerry Swartz of Henning, MN and he has served one term.

Region VIII consists of Maine, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and Ohio. The current director of Region VIII is Gene Barber of Lexington, KY and

he has served one term.

Region IX consists of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The current director of Region IX is James Fudge of Colquitt, GA and he has served one term.

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BSE Mitigation... (Continued from page 1)

Re: Request by United States Cattle Industry to Mitigate Potential Impacts of Suspected BSE Case

Dear President Bush and Secretary Veneman:

The United States live cattle industry and American consumers are fortunate that the United States had the foresight to implement meaningful safeguards to not only minimize the introduction of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the United States cattle herd, but also, to prepare for the possibility that one of these diseases may breach our firewalls.

Unfortunately, the United States may be facing its first case of BSE. While we cannot immediately determine if this suspect case originated in a domestic or imported animal, if the latter proves true, the United States will be insulated from a reduced BSE risk rating by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). Nevertheless, we are concerned that news of this suspect case may adversely impact the United States live cattle market.

On behalf of the nearly 9000 voluntary members of R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America

(R-CALF USA), along with its 54 affiliated local and state cattle associations, representing thousands more producers, we respectfully request that you take the following steps to mitigate the potential damage to the United States live cattle market and to maintain consumer confidence in our domestic beef supply:

Immediately close the United States border to all imports of live cattle, beef, and both raw and manufactured live-stock feed until the circumstances surrounding this suspected case are fully disclosed and understood.

This request was formulated during an emergency meeting called by R-CALF USA moments ago that included cow/calf producers, cattle feeders, and livestock auction yard owners from throughout the United States. The rationale for the requested action includes the fact that due to the United States' implementation of effective BSE risk mitigation measures in the early and mid 90s, there is a high probability that if BSE is confirmed in the United States, the BSE agent would most likely be introduced via imported ruminants or ruminant products. Second, given the potential for BSE to destroy the economic viability of a nation's cattle industry, the curtailment of excess supplies of imported beef and live cattle prior to the completion of a scientific investigation will prevent a mar-

ket collapse as was experienced by United Kingdom and Canadian producers. Third, if the cow in question is a domestic cow, determining how the cow contracted the disease, of course, will be of paramount importance. The probability is that the feed consumed by the cow was in part imported. Until we rule out that possibility, all imported feeds should be curtailed. Fourth, such precautionary steps will demonstrate that the maintenance of an economically viable cattle industry and the ongoing protection of our consumers' health and safety are priorities of the United States.

We pledge our support in your ongoing efforts to confirm whether we are dealing with the first case of BSE in the United States, to determine the origin of the index cow, to determine the cause of infection, and to work diligently to maintain consumer confidence in the safety of our domestic beef supply. We view this request as an essential step in preserving our domestic market and protecting consumer confidence.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Leo R. McDonnell, Jr.

President

Cc: Members of Congress

Sudden rise in BSE alarms scientists: 49 new cases in past year could be from feed contamination

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November 24, 2003

Scientists are considering new checks on the cattle disease BSE after an unexpected rise in cases in the UK among animals supposedly free from infection.

Strict rules banning the recycling of livestock in feed to other farm animals are meant to eventually eradicate the disastrous disease, which has still unquantified consequences for human health.

But the growing number of cattle succumbing to the disease even though they were born after the August 1996 watershed for feed rules in Britain is troubling experts. It may delay any decision on whether to relax another 1996 ban, on cattle meat from British animals over 30 months old being used in food. Although the youngest cattle with BSE are more than four years old, it is feared there may be a hidden route of infection, meaning the disease may hang on in the national herd for years.

Scientists suspect that contaminated imports brought into Britain before Europe-wide controls were introduced in January 2001 may be a factor. There is no evidence that very old feed stocks on British farms dating from the 80s or 90s have any role.

But there is a growing belief that detailed investigation is needed into other possible causes, including unexplained transmission from cow to cow or long-term contamination in soil.

The original cause of BSE has never been established and is unlikely to be, although the main favorites have been that sheep Scrapie, a disease apparently less dangerous to humans, was transformed into a killer in cattle, or that BSE was a once rare sporadic condition in cattle that spread.

Feed recycling was the principal cause for the speed at which the epidemic spiraled out of control until the early 1990s. There were 36,700 cases in 1992, compared with just over 500 so far this year. Feed rules were introduced in 1988 but the long incubation period of the disease, often four to five

years, sometimes more, meant they took a long time to have an effect.

In addition, the rules were not strictly enforced until months after the first cases of human BSE were recognized early in 1996.

There have been 77 confirmed BSE cases in the UK where the animals were born after August 1996, 49 of them in the past 12 months, eight in the past three weeks.

Other European countries have more BSE cattle born after 1996 but their outbreaks have never come close to matching the scale of Britain's, with well over 180,000 cases since 1986. They also conduct far more tests than Britain because there is no age limit on meat that can be used in food.

A paper to be considered by the main BSE advisory committee, Seac, on Wednesday indicates that feed contamination is the most "plausible" option, since trading of mammalian meat and bone meal was legal at ports in continental Europe until the start of 2001.

NFU to host COOL fly-in

National Farmers Union is organizing a targeted fly-in for January 20th regarding the Senate vote on the omnibus appropriations bill that includes a 2 year delay of implementation of mandatory COOL and would like to reach out to all the ACOL organizations to participate in the fly-in. The vote is scheduled to take place at 3 p.m. on Jan. 20, 2004, which will be their first day back in session after the holiday recess. The State of the Union is on the evening of Jan. 20.

For those of you who want to participate in the COOL targeted fly-in on Jan. 20, plan on arriving in Washington on Jan. 19 and leaving no earlier than 5 p.m. on Jan. 20. This will allow us to meet with as many senators as possible prior to

the vote.

The message of the COOL targeted fly-in is for senators to oppose passage of the omnibus appropriations bill as long as the provision to delay COOL remains in the bill.

Given the short notice, it is very important for you to determine if you want to participate soon. Please let R-CALF USA know as soon as possible how many people will be attending.

R-CALF USA has blocked off 20 rooms at the Hotel listed below at the rate of \$109 + tax per night for the nights of January 19 and 20. You must make your reservations by 5:00 p.m. EST January 12 Holiday Inn, WASHINGTON-CAPITOL@SMITHSONIAN, 550 C Street SW,

WASHINGTON, DC 20024, Tel: 1-202-4794000 and ask for the "Reservations Department" and request the room blocked off for the United Stockgrowers of America., Fax: 1-202-4794353, Email: guestservices@hicapitol.com.

You should plan on arriving in Washington on January 19 and leave no earlier than 5:00 p.m. on January 20. If we run out of rooms, we'll find more. This is our chance to give the Senate a solid reason to stand behind their overwhelming vote on the Sense of the Senate Amendment.

Please contact Katy Ziegler at 202-314-3103 for NFU or Jenni Ries at 406-252-2516 at R-CALF USA as soon as possible if you want to participate, so we have an idea how many folks will be in town.

USDA extends COOL comment period

BILLINGS, MT (Dec. 17, 2003) The comment period on implementation rules for mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) will be extended for 60 days beyond the current December 29 deadline, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman announced Wednesday. Veneman noted that groups that favor country of origin labeling and those that oppose COOL have both requested the extension.

R-CALF USA Country of Origin Committee Chair Danni Beer heralded the news, "This will set the deadline after our upcoming January convention and give R-CALF USA members more opportunities to provide input and workable rules to implement mandatory COOL."

R-CALF USA has hosted two COOL Summits for U.S. cattle industry organizations to gather and formulate workable, least-cost approaches to implement COOL. R-CALF USA Executive Director John Lockie said, "In the proposed rules from USDA there is direction to each industry to work out the details of implementing the law for their covered commodity. R-CALF USA, at the direction of our U.S. cattle producer members, is steadfast in support for COOL."

Register for convention today! Call 406-252-2516.

Prion Roundtable finds opening the border "questionable"

On Thursday, December 11, 2003, R-CALF USA and a number of its affiliate cattle organizations sponsored a Prion Disease Roundtable in Denver, Colorado. Dr. R. M. Thornsberry, President of the Missouri Stockgrower's Association was commissioned by R-CALF USA President Leo McDonnell to organize the roundtable and invite prion specialists to present information at the roundtable that would benefit the education of livestock producers throughout the United States.

Dr. Stanley Prusiner, the scientist who discovered prions, for which he won the Nobel Prize in

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OCM: cattle owners should attend historic Pickett trial

LINCOLN, NE (Dec. 15, 2003) The Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) strongly encourages all cattle owners to make plans to attend the historic captive supply trial, known as Pickett v. IBP, in Montgomery, Alabama beginning January 12, 2004. This is the first major effort in the 80 year history of the Packers & Stockyards Act for cattle owners to take the law into their own hands in response to market manipulation in the cattle markets.

"This is the first class action case ever brought against beef packers," said Fred Stokes, OCM president. "In the storied history of farmers and ranchers advocating for antitrust laws and the enforcement of those laws, this multiple week trial will be the next chapter. It just so happens that Alabama is a far warmer place to be in January than are the Midwest, Plains and Western states. Ranchers and feeders should take their families to Montgomery for a week or two beginning January 12 to view the trial and to tour the area within driving distance to the Gulf Coast."

The trial promises the disclosure of reams of internal IBP (now owned by Tyson) information, testimony by cattle owners, and testimony by IBP employees. "Cattle owners are doing what USDA

has failed to do: enforce the law," continued Stokes. "The plaintiffs and their attorneys have looked where USDA has refused to look—inside the books kept by IBP."

The plaintiff class representatives are cattle owners from Alabama, Kansas, Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska. They are seeking substantial money damages to be paid by IBP as compensation for illegally manipulating and controlling the cattle market. The plaintiffs also seek injunctive relief in the form of a court order prohibiting IBP from using captive supplies as a means to manipulate prices.

"This case has the potential to turn back the trend from closed and manipulated markets, to open and competitive markets," said Stokes. "The jury will hear both sides before deciding without the benefit of campaign contributions from meat packers, their associations, or their lackeys. We cannot emphasize enough the historic importance of this case for the cattle industry, and also for other livestock sectors."

Those seeking more information about accommodations and dates should contact Steve Cady, OCM executive director, at 402-792-0041.

Support those who support the U.S. cattle industry! Be sure to thank those congress people, local business, and county and state organizations working on your behalf. Together we'll get the job done!

OIE Determination... (Continued from page 1)

adopt differing BSE risk mitigation policies," Bullard explained. He said the EU policy is to test every animal over 30 months of age for BSE if it is destined for human consumption. "France, however, has adopted a more stringent policy of testing all animals over 24 months of age," he said.

Officials at the OIE briefed APHIS and the U.S. cattle and beef industry representatives on the OIE's mission which includes the development of standards used by its 162-member countries to protect themselves against disease incursions. For BSE, the standards are categorized according to a country's risk status and OIE recommends various risk mitigation measures that increase in severity as a country moves from a lower-risk category to a higher-risk category. Bullard said that R-CALF USA is most concerned that the OIE remain a science-based organization independent of political pressure. "The level of risk associated with BSE must be established by science, while the decision regarding what level of risk a member country is willing to accept should be left to the political process within the member-country," he said, adding, "I was pleased to learn that OIE maintains that the science behind its international BSE standards remains valid."

Bullard said that from 1989 to mid-2003, the United States maintained a zero-risk policy using the OIE's risk categories as its scientific basis. "Until this August, our policy was to allow imports only from countries which met the BSE-free categories of the OIE." In August of 2003, the USDA relaxed its zero-risk policy and began accepting imports of certain beef products from Canada even though Canada no longer meets the OIE's BSE-free categories. "This visit to the OIE reinforced our position that the United States has relaxed its position regarding the level of risk it is willing to accept while the basic science establishing the actual risk has remained unchanged," Bullard said.

"Thus," said Bullard, "The decision to relax our import restrictions with Canada was politically motivated and not based on any new internationally accepted science." Bullard told the participating APHIS officials that the BSE issue clearly defines the differences between the U.S. live cattle industry and the U.S. beef industry. He said that U.S. cattle producers realize no additional benefit by accepting anything less than a zero-risk policy towards the Canadian BSE case. "If we relax our current zero-risk policy, U.S. live cattle prices will be reduced due to increased supplies of both beef and live cattle from Canada. If, by accepting this increased risk, the BSE agent is introduced in the U.S., the U.S. cattle industry will suffer even more.

Special auctions planned for 2004 Convention

During the 2004 National R-CALF USA Convention there will be a several very special donated items up for auction, all for the benefit R-CALF USA.

R-CALF USA members Allen and Linda Padgett of Ennis, MT have donated a complete elk hunt including meals and lodging. Padgett's Ramble J Enterprise Inc. has worked out an arrangement with the Montana Fish and Game Department to guarantee a license for a spring 2004 elk hunt. Purchaser will be responsible for purchasing the elk license. Contact Ramble J Enterprise at 406-682-5329.

R-CALF USA members Sam and Gaila Prill of Burwell, NE has donated a guided two-day grouse hunt. The hunt will take place on Prill's 13,000 acre Erina Ranch north of Burwell. Lodging and tags are included. Contact Sam Prill at 308-348-2079.

Finally, Larry Zabel has donated a beautiful print titled "New Calves and Old Friends." Larry Zabel of McAllister, MT is an acclaimed western artist. This is the third print Mr. Zabel has donated to R-CALF USA. Contact Larry Zabel at 800-736-5344.

The live auction will be held Friday, January 23, 2004 at Convention. If you'd like to donate an auction item or participate in the silent auction, contact the R-CALF USA office or bring your item to the registration desk.

There are no up-sides for U.S. cattle producers for taking any additional risk," he said.

However, Bullard said the packer has a very different interest in accepting more risk. He explained that the packer stands to benefit immediately by accepting more risk because it immediately increases the available supplies of both beef and live cattle, thereby reducing the demand and the price of domestic cattle and beef. If the BSE agent is introduced in the U.S., he said the packer's supply of beef would remain unchanged, and the only factor affecting their continued profitability would be whether consumer confidence was affected. "Thus, from the packers' perspective, accepting greater risk means immediate benefits and minimal drawbacks," he said.

Bullard explained that the issue facing the United States is whether to relax its zero-risk policy towards BSE despite the fact that the international science supporting its zero-risk policy, as adopted by the OIE, remains unchanged. "We're in a political battle over whether to relax our current standards and it's clear that the greatest risk falls to the U.S. cattle producer," he said.

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medicine, was invited to the roundtable. Notes from Dr. Prusiner's presentation on prions and prion diseases was presented to the roundtable by Dr. Thornsberry, who had attended one of Dr. Prusiner's lectures on prion diseases. Although unable to attend the roundtable, Dr. Prusiner provided the roundtable with five papers published in prestigious peer-reviewed medical and science journals. These papers were provided to all the attendees and key points from these papers were discussed at the beginning of the roundtable discussion. Dr. Prusiner emphasized normal cooking temperatures do not inactivate prions. This point is especially important when humans are exposed to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) prions in the normal process of consuming beef muscle cuts that may contain significant nerve tissue. Dr. Prusiner's laboratory is currently developing a live animal test to determine whether or not an animal is carrying BSE prions prior to entering the food chain for human consumption.

Dr. Jason Bartz, an applied science researcher from Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, was the second presenter at the roundtable. Dr. Bartz presented current research data on prion diseases and particularly outlined the pathogenesis of prion diseases. Dr. Bartz presented data that defined the ability of prions to replicate in secondary lymphoreticular system tissues, and the ability of prions to travel throughout the nervous system, finally locating within the brain or brain stem tissues where pathological changes occur. Dr. Bartz also presented data to illustrate the severity of prion disease appears to increase as the disease is passed from animal to animal. Dr. Bartz presented data to illustrate the infectivity and persistence of prions. Prions in brain tissue were heated to 600 degrees Celsius—that is over 1200 degrees Fahrenheit—and injected into brain tissue. These heat treated prions were still capable of causing prion disease changes. In other words, there is no commonly utilized method with which to inactivate prions on surgical instruments, surfaces, pens, corrals, chutes, ground, etc. Dr. Bartz also presented data that indicates tongue lesions or sores provide the mechanism for prions to enter brain tissue through the nerve that supplies the muscle tissue of an animal's tongue. Dr. Bartz, with more sensitive immunodetection, has identified prions in muscle tissues of the tongue.

Dr. Terry Spraker, a veterinary pathologist from Colorado State University, demonstrated in his presentation that not all animals that develop prion disease die immediately. On the contrary, animals can carry prion disease and shed large numbers of prions for months, and maybe years, before the disease progresses to the point where it may be identified by clinical symptoms. Dr. Spraker mentioned that research being done by Hamair Amair in Ames, Iowa, Mike Miller with the Colorado Department of Wildlife, and Beth Wil-

liams thus far shows no evidence of natural transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and elk to cattle.

Dr. Linda Detwiler, adjunct professor and animal health consultant specializing in prion diseases and other regulatory issues, presented her findings from prion disease investigations in Canada and Europe. Dr. Detwiler also presented a short video of four Holstein cows with BSE. The clinical signs were extremely subtle. Although they appeared essentially normal, they could have infectivity in certain tissues such as intestine and tonsil for months prior to developing clinical signs. Dr. Detwiler identified risk factors present in the United States and Canada that could result in exposing negative ruminants to prions. The BSE case in a native Canadian cow demonstrates that the BSE agent is in North America. Some of the current practices which could pose a risk to the North American cattle production system include no specified risk material (SRM) ban (tissues such bovine brain and spinal cord can still be included in non-ruminant feed) so if the agent is present there could be contamination of feed for ruminants if produced in plants with no dedicated lines. There are certain exemptions to the current U.S. feed ban which could potentially expose U.S. cattle to the BSE agent. These include the feeding of ruminant blood meal, unfiltered beef tallow, and poultry litter to ruminants. In addition, there is no SRM ban in place for public health. That is, bovine brain, spinal cord and other potentially infected tissues may still be used in food products.

Dr. Susan Keller, Deputy State Veterinarian for North Dakota, presented the regulatory issues surrounding prion diseases including Scrapie in sheep and BSE in cattle. During a discussion on the most recent Harvard Risk Assessment for BSE in the United States, Dr. Keller attempted to determine what the industry response would be to a single case of BSE in the United States. The fact that the incubation period of BSE is extremely long (possibly up to 20 years), Dr. Keller determined that responding to a single case of BSE could potentially encompass up to 20 years of regulatory activity to ensure the public that BSE was under control in the United States. Although the Harvard Risk Assessment for BSE is accurate, it does not take into account the devastating effect of a single case in the United States on state regulatory function and financing. Once Canada is designated an acceptable risk country for export of meat or animals into the United States, other countries with a history of cases of BSE will also petition the United States government for the same export status.

Following the roundtable, a general consensus was reached on four topics:

1. Prion diseases are infective, especially within susceptible species. Although most animals that exhibit symptoms of prion disease die, thus ending the progression of the disease, that animal may in fact shed many prions into the environment prior to

and after death.

2. Since there is no known Standard Operating Procedural Method to adequately disinfect or inactivate prions, extreme caution should be taken with prion diseases, their research, and their disposal.

3. New more sensitive prion histochemical testing procedures identify prions in muscle tissue as well as lymphoid and nervous tissue. This finding is reinforced by Dr. Prusiner's laboratory, which is developing a pre-slaughter test to identify prions in tissues prior to meat entering the food chain. This finding means human exposure to prions in certain muscle cuts of beef is possible.

4. Opening the border to Canada is questionable until high risk factors such as the feeding of blood meal, feather meal, unfiltered beef tallow, poultry manure, and non-ruminant species feeding of meat and bone meal is properly addressed by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

The roundtable presentations and discussions were recorded. A transcript will be made available to the Academy of Veterinary Consultants, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine throughout the United States and Canada. A condensed version translated for the livestock industry will be made available to educate livestock producers about prion related diseases.

This press release was written by Dr. R. M. Thornsberry, the moderator of the Prion Disease Roundtable and has been edited and approved by those participating in the roundtable. A transcript approved and edited by all participants will be available in January, 2004. For a copy of that transcript, write to: R. M. Thornsberry, D.V.M., P.O. Box 818, Richland, MO 65556 or email:cowman@webound.com.

BSE Cow... (Continued from page 1)

through policy, legislation, and/or rulemaking. However, McDonnell said that USDA should, on its own, cancel its current proposal to re-open the border to Canadian beef products and live cattle. "At the very least, USDA should consider R-CALF USA's standing request to extend the January 5, 2004, comment deadline so the entire industry can focus its resources on this current problem," he suggested. McDonnell said while R-CALF USA and other organizations have requested an extension of time, the USDA is still considering the request.

R-CALF USA had also requested, on December 23, 2003, that the USDA immediately close its borders to the importation of all live cattle, beef, and raw and manufactured feed products until the circumstances surrounding this case are fully understood. "This is a pru-

(Continued on page 8)

R-CALF USA Fifth Annual National Convention - Denver, CO

“Implementing Change for the U.S. Cattle Industry”

Convention Schedule

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

5:00 p.m. Affiliate Council Meeting—Chuck Kiker, Chair

6:00 p.m. Directors Meeting

Thursday, January 22, 2004

7:00 a.m. Trade Show opens—coffee available in Trade Show area

8:00 a.m. Convention Welcome by Ken Winters, Convention Chair
National Anthem
Opening comments by President Leo McDonnell
Convention rules by Vice President Kathleen Kelley

8:45 a.m. Break—Trade Show

9:00 a.m. Country of Origin Labeling Panel
A View from USDA
Benefits—An Economic Analysis
Beef Industry Perspectives
Foreign and Domestic Consumer Perspectives

10:45 a.m. Break—Trade Show

11:00 a.m. Commodity Market Update by Charlie McVean

Noon Lunch
Guest Speaker Alan Guebert

1:30 p.m. An Analysis of BSE—Part I
A view from USDA-APHIS
An update from the OIE by C.E.O Bill Bullard
Panel of Researchers headed by Dr. Max Thornsberry, DVM

3:00 p.m. Break—Trade Show

3:20 p.m. Analysis of BSE—Part II
Japanese Official Perspective by Masahito Enomoto
Canadian Official Perspective by John Masswohl

4:00 p.m. National Animal Identification Discussion with Dr. Dick Bowman, DVM and Dr. Max Thornsberry, DVM

4:45 p.m. Policy Development

6:00 p.m. Trade Show, Silent Auction, and Cowboy Social

7:00 p.m. Dinner and Entertainment with musician Red Steagall

Friday, January 23, 2004

7:00 a.m. Trade Show Opens—coffee available in Trade Show area

8:00 a.m. Review of Trade Negotiations
WTO Ag Negotiations
Australian FTA

FTAA and other trade agreements

9:00 a.m. Export Market Developments – USMEF

9:45 a.m. Break—Trade Show

10:15 a.m. Ag and Trade—A view from other ag industries

10:30 a.m. “Trade Opportunities and Concerns for the U.S. Cattle Industry” by Terry Stewart

Noon Lunch
Guest speaker Colorado Attorney General Ken Salazar with “States Attorney Generals Role in Antitrust”

1:30 p.m. Development of competition and market issues important to U.S. cattle producers—Part I
GIPSA Updates
Ongoing litigation and legislation—Roger McEowan

3:00 p.m. Break—Trade Show

3:30 p.m. Development of competition and market issues important to U.S. cattle producers—Part II
Feeders Perspective
Academic Perspective

4:30 p.m. Policy Development

5:00 p.m. Trade Show, Silent Auction, and Cowboy Social

6:30 p.m. Banquet and Awards Presentation

Saturday, January 24, 2003

8:00 a.m. Livestock Risk Protection – LMA and USDA

9:00 a.m. Committee Reports
Affiliate Council—Chuck Kiker
Membership Committee—Jack McNamee
Fundraising and Communications—John Lockie
Washington D.C. Office—Trent Thomas
Trade Committee—Dennis McDonald and Brett DeBruycker

10:00 a.m. C.E.O. Report—Bill Bullard
Association Report
Finalize Policy

Noon Lunch
Convention Wrap-up with Vice President Kathleen Kelley

Questions? Comments? Call 406-252-2516 for more information!

R-CALF USA Fifth Annual National Convention - Denver, CO

"Implementing Change for the U.S. Cattle Industry"

Attendee Registration

Make your reservations now and take advantage of special reduced room rates—\$59.00 plus tax for single or double occupancy, \$65.00 plus tax for an executive upgrade! Amenities include an airport shuttle from 5:00 a.m. to midnight seven days a week, voice mail, and modem/data port connections. Check-in is 3:00 p.m. and check out is noon. Call the Red Lion Inn at 303-321-6666 for reservations.

Directions from DIA: Take I-70 West to Quebec Street (Exit 278) and go south on Quebec Street. Exit Smith Road and go east on Sandown Road. At the Stop sign, go through the intersection and the Red Lion Hotel is next to the Postal Credit Union.

Directions from I-70 east-bound: Take Exit 278 Quebec Street, stay right for Smith Road. After exiting, move to the left lane and take the first left onto Sandown Road. Cross over the Quebec Street upper level (Stop Sign) and go through the intersection onto the frontage road in front of Postal Credit Union. The hotel entrance is on the right hand side.

Directions from I-270 southeast-bound: Take the Quebec Street Exit and turn left and get in the far right lane and pass under the Interstate. Stay right for Smith Road, after exiting move to the left lane. Take the first left onto Sandown Road and crossover the Quebec Street upper level (Stop Sign) and

go through the intersection onto the frontage road in front of Postal Credit Union. The hotel entrance is on the right hand side.

R-CALF USA encourages convention-goers to register early to take advantage of reduced registration rates. There are a limited number of meals available and registration after Jan. 15, 2004 increases to \$60.00. To guarantee your place at convention at a great rate, pre-register by mail or telephone at 406-252-2516.

Once again, R-CALF USA will be holding both silent and live auction fundraisers, and members are encouraged to donate items or services. Past conventions' auctions included apparel, tack, house wares, veterinary supplies, supplements, oil changes and repair services, and registered semen. All donors are granted an additional year of membership for their generosity. To make a donation, ship your auction item to R-CALF USA, 155 S. 18th St. and Minnesota Ave., Billings, MT 59101 by January 15, 2003 or bring your item to the registration desk at convention.

Do you want to propose a resolution and need help drafting it? Do you have a policy idea, but can't make it to convention? Call 406-252-2516 and our staff will make sure your concerns get to convention!

Registration	Cost	# of Attendees	Sub-total
Conference Pre-registration Cost (Registration after Jan. 15, 2004 is \$60.00)	\$50.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
Meals			
Thursday			
Lunch (All-American Burger made with U.S.A. Beef)*	\$11.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
Dinner (Flat Iron Steak)*	\$26.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
Friday			
Lunch (Beef Tips and Rice)*	\$14.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
Banquet (Rib-eye Steak)*	\$28.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
Saturday			
Lunch (Pot Roast with Mashed Potatoes and Vegetables)*	\$14.00 X	_____ =	\$ _____
			Total \$ _____

*Meals must be guaranteed 48 hours prior to the conference. Extra meals may or may not be available at registration on Jan. 22-24. Price includes gratuity.

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Payment: Visa MasterCard Check Money Order Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date _____ Name on Card _____

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

Mail payment and registration to: R-CALF USA, 2003 National Convention, P.O. Box 30715, Billings, MT 59107.



The Cattlemen's Newsletter

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Japan to alter domestic beef labeling system *by Eric Hanson on 12/3/03 for Meatingplace.com*

Japanese beef looks like it will be getting its own version of country of origin labeling.

Brand name beef associated with certain areas in Japan is a big selling point among consumers, and new regulations being created by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are expected to require labels on beef to state where an animal spent most of its life if that location differs from the region the brand name refers to, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

The rule is expected to go into effect in the summer.

For example, the brand "Omi beef" could only

be applied to meat from an animal that was born and raised for most of its life in the Shiga Prefecture, which is the region associated with that brand. If an animal spent most of its life elsewhere and was moved to the prefecture for slaughter or shipping, the label would have to state where the animal spent most of its time.

The regulations are designed to crack down on misleading labels and try to revive flagging consumer confidence in beef, the newspaper said.

The ministry also plans to remove a rule that allowed imported cattle to be labeled as domestic beef if the animals were fattened in Japan for three months, the newspaper reported.

Sites worth seeing

LMA offers several different coverage programs tailored to meet the needs of cattle producers and feeders. Check out the below links for more information.

- Livestock Risk Protection—<http://www.lmaweb.com/lmialrp.html>
- Long Term Care Coverage—<http://www.lmaweb.com/LTC/index.htm>
- Pasture/Feedlot and Mortality Coverage—<http://www.lmaweb.com/lmiapasture.html>

BSE Mitigation... *(Continued from page 5)*

dent precautionary step the United States should take to ensure that we don't exacerbate this problem by introducing any potentially contaminated products during this investigation," he said. R-CALF USA further requested that the Commodities Future Trading Commission immediately restore the \$1.50 daily price limit on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange until the investigation is complete. "This is a prudent step to ensure the market does not overreact to the limited information surrounding this case, thus protecting the economic viability of our live cattle producers," he concluded.

Notice of Correction

There is a typographical error in the article "Changing the Rules of the Game" contained in the December 2003 *The Cattlemen's Newsletter*. The error is that in 1998, the U.S. exported \$350 million worth of cattle and beef to Canada, not \$3.5 million. Also, in 2002, the U.S. exports to Canada actually fell \$340 million, not \$3.4 million. Thus, the value \$3.5 million should be changed to \$350 million and the value \$3.4 million should be changed to \$340 million.

New Members

	Oct. '03	Nov. '03
Alabama	-	1
Arizona	2	2
California	15	-
Colorado	1	4
Georgia	-	1
Florida	8	5
Idaho	2	4
Iowa	-	3
Kansas	1	1
Louisiana	1	-
Maryland	2	-
Minnesota	-	1
Missouri	-	2
Montana	34	18
Nebraska	1	15
Nevada	2	-
North Dakota	2	31
Oklahoma	1	4
Oregon	1	1
Pennsylvania	2	-
South Dakota	83	123
Texas	4	2
Utah	1	-
Virginia	1	1
Washington	5	-
West Virginia	-	1
Wyoming	4	3
Total	173	223