



BSE Update

BSE CASE CONFIRMED IN ALBERTA

December 18, 2007 - The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has confirmed the diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a 13-year-old beef cow from Alberta. The animal's carcass is under CFIA control, and no part of it entered the human food or animal feed systems.

Canada has a suite of robust BSE control measures exceeding the recommended international standards. This year, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) categorized Canada as a Controlled Risk country for BSE. This status acknowledges the effectiveness of Canada's surveillance, risk mitigation and eradication measures. This case will not affect Canada's risk status.

Canada has taken all necessary measures to achieve the eventual elimination of BSE from the national cattle herd. The enhanced feed ban, which came into effect on July 12, 2007, is designed to prevent more than 99 percent of potential BSE infectivity from entering the Canadian feed system. The feed ban prohibits cattle-derived materials with potential to harbour BSE infectivity, such as the brain and spinal cord, from being used in all animal feeds, pet foods and fertilizers.

The CFIA expects to detect a small number of cases over the next 10 years as Canada progresses towards its goal of eliminating the disease from the national cattle herd.

This detection confirms the ongoing high level of commitment and stewardship on the part of Canadian cattle producers to food safety and animal health. The Alberta animal was identified at the farm level by the national surveillance program, which has detected all BSE cases found in Canada. The program targets cattle most at risk and has tested about 190,000 animals since 2003. The surveillance results reflect an extremely low incidence of BSE in Canada.

The age of the infected animal falls within the age range of previous cases detected in Canada under the national BSE surveillance program. The animal was born before the implementation of Canada's feed ban in 1997.

An epidemiological investigation directed by international guidelines is underway to identify the animal's herdmates at the time of birth and the pathways by which it might have become infected. All findings will be publicly released once the investigation concludes.

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For information:
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Media relations: (613) 228-6682

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