

One Case of Mad Cow Disease (BSE)

A CFFO Advisory

1. Key Findings from a BSE Study Session in September 2003

- 1.1 One case of BSE is having a massive and disproportionate impact on the livestock sector because of ad hoc guidelines drafted by the Organization International Des Epizooties (World Organization for Animal Health) in response to the epidemic in the U.K.
- 1.2 Canada has done all it can to identify the source of the infection.
- 1.3 Canada's official report to the OIE states: "It is the considered opinion of the Government of Canada that the animal was born in Canada and was exposed to a contaminated feed source early in its life prior to the feed ban introduced in 1997. The most likely source of contamination of the feed was asymptomatic animals imported into North America from the United Kingdom between 1982 and 1989 that entered the food chain through natural attrition."
- 1.4 An independent international team of experts from the public and animal health community of three continents has validated Canada's findings about our one infected cow.
- 1.5 Only seven countries are classified as BSE-Free under the ad hoc guidelines of the OIE.
- 1.6 Canadians have remained confident in the quality of Canadian beef. During August they purchased 60% more beef.
- 1.7 The market for Canadian beef will never be the same.
 - 1.7.1 The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has ordered all Specified Risk Material (brains & spine) out of the food chain. This means retooling processing plants and procedures resulting in extra costs. The U.S. does not plan to take this action.
 - 1.7.2 The offal market has changed dramatically. Much of it now costs money to dispose when there used to be excellent ethnic markets for much of it.
 - 1.7.3 Ruminant animals no longer have any value in the deadstock market and removal now has a cost.
- 1.8 Export markets for Canadian beef could take quite a while to "normalize."
 - 1.8.1 Boxed beef requires a whole new permitting system that could stay in place for quite a while. Only meat from cattle under 30 months of age is eligible resulting in export processors handling only cattle under 30 months.
 - 1.8.2 Opening borders to live animals may require the writing of new rules by the OIE.
 - 1.8.3 There is a strong demand for Canadian stockers, finished beef and genetics in the U.S.. This may encourage the U.S. to make independent arrangements for live imports until the OIE develops an

international agreement on how to respond to incidental cases of BSE.
(The U.S. has a lot of incentive to get such rules written as its beef herd likely has incidental cases in it too.)

- 1.8.4 When borders re-open, importers are likely to demand traceability through a national ID system.
- 1.9 Other ruminant livestock are experiencing similar turmoil as the beef sector.
 - 1.9.1 The market for dairy heifers has collapsed.
 - 1.9.2 Lamb prices have deteriorated in Ontario since Alberta's lambs normally exported to the U.S. are coming here.

2. New Agenda's for the Ruminant Livestock Sector

- 2.1 An animal identification system is a must.
- 2.2 The movement of livestock needs a better trail.
- 2.3 Better herd health will help contain all diseases. Prevention has become much more important.
- 2.4 Research is needed to manage deadstock on-farm, develop incineration as a reliable on-farm technology, create reliable standards for downer cattle and to develop new uses for offal.
- 2.5 On farm food safety systems need to be developed for ruminant livestock (Quality Assurance and/or HACCP).
- 2.6 The merits of further globalization of the beef market needs to be reconsidered.
- 2.7 Studies are needed to identify more a reliable basis for developing a North American integrated beef market.
- 2.8 Livestock feed, content and standards, need a review.
- 2.9 The idea of creating livestock health zones in Canada needs to be explored.
- 2.10 Beef producers need to consider developing new markets by developing their own processing facilities.

3. Resolution

Whereas closing borders as a result of one case of mad cow disease is more disastrous than the disease itself.

Whereas current BSE guidelines were written by an ad hoc group in response to the United Kingdom's BSE epidemic.

Therefore be it resolved

That CFFO call on the governments of Canada, the United States and other signatories to the Organization International Des Epizooties (World Organization for Animal Health), to negotiate on an urgent basis a new international protocol for responding to incidental cases of BSE in national cattle herds.

Adopted September 24, 2003
Provincial Board
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario