



NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION

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NMA STATEMENT

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To the extent that Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) exists in the United States, it exists at an extraordinarily low level. Despite a targeted surveillance program that has focused on the highest risk livestock, in 20 months of testing the USDA found only one older U.S.-born bovine positive for BSE out of 573,599 samples collected. The prevalence is extremely low, and virtually nonexistent.

The U.S. livestock industry, in cooperation with packers and processors, renderers and the animal feed industry have worked closely with the U.S. government to put in place the appropriate preventive steps using the best available science and technology. This has been done, based on lessons learned from the extensive experience elsewhere in the world. These preventive steps mandated by the U.S. government, firewalls if you will, have cumulatively provided assurance against any such situation occurring in the U.S. They have been taken with an overabundance of caution, and even in 2006, further steps are being considered to strengthen these preventive firewalls.

It is important that comments urging additional controls be judged within the context of the extensive efforts and strong record of success which the U.S. has compiled in the past fifteen years. Comments in the pending rulemaking may raise important questions. Our government should fully consider them in the course of considering all of the comments it has received in response to its rulemaking and decide based on the best known science, with careful attention that there are no unintended consequences from the controls adopted. Simply to mirror the precautions of other nations which failed to implement BSE firewalls in a timely fashion would be unjustified.

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