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Wisconsin State Legislature

January 30, 2004

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Ann M. Veneman, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman,

We applaud your leadership in taking immediate action upon the discovery of BSE in a single cow from the State of Washington. In hindsight, to be zealous in protecting our nation's food safety had the needed effect of quelling emotions and maintaining confidence in our meat safety at the national and international levels.

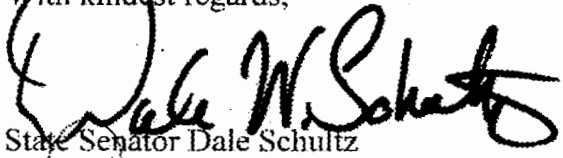
Your leadership with respect to a three-month emergency rule to ban all downer cows, including even those with a physical injury having no relation to BSE, positions us to now progress to a thoughtful, long-term policy that further enhances our excellent meat testing system.

As legislative leaders for Wisconsin agriculture, we call upon you to implement a permanent rule based upon the extensive body of science related to BSE, that ensures the safety of our beef products and does not result in unwarranted cost to our nation's farmers and consumers. For example, USDA rules should facilitate live removal of downer cows from a farm for testing. Test results should then determine appropriate disposal or marketing.

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Again, we commend you for tackling this complex issue immediately and directly. We look forward to working together with you and your agency to enhance our nation's food safety systems.

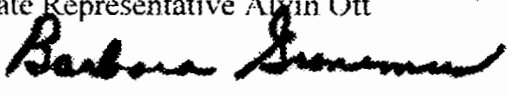
With kindest regards,


State Senator Dale Schultz



State Representative Alvin Ott


State Senator Dave Hansen



State Representative Barbara Gronemus

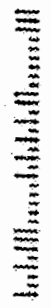


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