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# United States Senate

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May 23, 2003

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The Honorable Ann M. Veneman  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Room 200-A  
Jamie L. Witten Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman,

The action you took earlier this week to suspend imports of live cattle and beef products from Canada was right on the mark. I commend you for it.

I am writing now to request that the United States Department of Agriculture not reopen the United States border to Canadian beef imports until the Canadian government assures the U.S. that the threat of mad cow disease in Canada is eradicated.

The United States must have reasonable proof from the Canadian government that first, the present outbreak of mad cow disease is contained and eradicated, and second, the Canadian government will take the necessary steps to revamp their current food inspection and food safety systems. This is to assure the American consumer and the American beef industry that the threat of mad cow disease coming into this country is eliminated.

The events concerning the mad cow disease outbreak in Canada are alarming. Allowing the head of a diseased cow to sit on a shelf for four months because "they are short staffed" is not an excuse our country should accept. We in the U.S. consume 78 percent of Canadian beef, over 1 billion pounds per year. It is not acceptable for Canada to delay testing a sick cow for four months because they "are short of pathologists."

Until we are assured, Madam Secretary, that the trading of Canadian beef is safe and that the Canadian government demonstrates a commitment to change their food safety and food inspection systems the U.S. border ought to remain closed to Canadian beef imports of any kind. The American consumer and the American beef industry deserve no less.

Sincerely,

*Thanks for the  
call yesterday!*



Byron L. Dorgan  
U.S. Senator