



HUMANE EDUCATION NETWORK

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FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket 03-025IF
Room 102, Cotton Annex
300 12th and C Street SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

In 1996, after officials in Great Britain theorized a connection between some animal-based cattle feeds and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the Food and Drug Administration announced it would expedite rules that prohibited the use of those products for cattle. A year and a half later, after much resistance from the animal feed industry, the FDA's new restrictions finally took effect. At that time, the threat of BSE in the United States seemed only hypothetical.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent ban on the use of "downed" cattle for human consumption is meeting similar resistance from the agricultural industry. We urge the USDA to stand firm on the ban. Mad cow disease is now a reality in our country. In the 1980s and 90s, many European governments ignored the interests of consumers while protecting those of agribusiness, resulting in a mad cow epidemic that's had devastating economic consequences there. Several countries are restructuring how their food is produced.

We still don't know everything there is to know about BSE. The "downer" ban is a protection for the human consumer against BSE and other diseases, and it should include downers of all species. It's also important because it's a step toward more humane treatment of food animals. Downed animals should be euthanized. No animal too sick or injured to stand or walk should be forced into trying to do so, nor should their suffering be aggravated by being dragged or shoved to slaughter.


S.M. Bancroft, Director