APHIS STATEMENT

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Update from APHIS Regarding Release of the Final Report on the BSE Epidemiological Investigation

Today, USDA is releasing its final report on the epidemiological investigation of a dairy cow from California that tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in April 2012. This epidemiological report is the result of months of close coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), local officials, and the associated dairy and rendering facility.

In accordance with World Organization for Animal Health guidance, USDA conducted a thorough epidemiological investigation following the BSE detection. This included on-the-ground investigations and records review from the rendering facility, the index farm, and associated premises, as well as traceback for progeny and birth cohorts of the index cow.

The results of this thorough investigation confirmed that at no time was the U.S. food supply or human health at risk, and that the United States' longstanding system of interlocking safeguards against BSE continues to be effective.

This case was found in an animal that was sampled for the disease at a rendering facility in central California. This animal was never presented for slaughter for human consumption, so at no time presented a risk to the food supply, or to human health in the United States.

The index animal was a 10 year 7 month-old Holstein cow from a central California dairy. The animal was humanely euthanized after it developed lameness and became recumbent, and was sampled by a renderer contracted to collect samples as part of USDA's ongoing BSE surveillance. Results from immunohistochemistry and Western blot tests at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed the animal positive for atypical BSE. Samples were also sent to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) reference laboratories in Canada and England. The laboratories confirmed that the index cow was positive for atypical (L-type) BSE.

As a result of on-the-ground investigation and records review, USDA and CDFA identified only one live offspring of the cow, which was humanely euthanized and found to be negative for BSE. No birth cohorts of the index animal were found alive.

The carcass of the index animal (along with approximately 90 other carcasses being held at the renderer's transfer station), were disposed of in a landfill in accordance with all Federal, State

and local regulations. The carcass of the index animal did not enter the human or animal food chain.

In conjunction with USDA's investigation, FDA and CDFA conducted an extensive feed investigation. Twelve feed suppliers were identified to the index premises; one of which was no longer in business. The remaining 11 were found to be in compliance with FDA and CDFA regulations and requirements. FDA has released a full report on the feed investigation. It is available at http://www.fda.gov/.

The United States has a longstanding system of three interlocking safeguards against BSE that protects human and animal health, the most important of which is the removal of specified risk materials – or the parts of an animal that would contain the BSE agent should an animal have the disease – from all animals presented for slaughter in the United States. The second safeguard is a strong feed ban that protects cattle from the disease. The third safeguard—which led to this detection— is our ongoing BSE surveillance program that allows USDA to detect the disease if it exists at very low levels in the U.S. cattle population and provides assurances to consumers and our international trading partners that the interlocking system of safeguards in place to prevent BSE are working.

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