



Monthly Report

By Gjenna Vold

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CFIA Feed Investigation

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is currently conducting an investigation after potentially non-compliant feed prepared for ruminants was distributed to farms in Saskatchewan. Ruminant meat and bone meal, which is prohibited from being fed to ruminants, was mistakenly transported to a plant that was expecting compliant feather meal and it was inadvertently incorporated into ruminant feeds. The transport unit that hauled the non-compliant ingredient subsequently hauled grain product to a second mill, which may have resulted in cross-contamination.

As soon as it was informed of this, the CFIA began working with the feed producers and livestock owners. CFIA inspectors tracked the feed through every distribution channel. As a precaution, all farms identified as potentially receiving the non-compliant feed have been quarantined while the CFIA conducts a science-based risk assessment.

It is important to note that there is no risk to the human food chain associated

with this incident. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is confident in the investigation efforts of the CFIA and will disseminate more information on this issue as it becomes available.

Canada's 9th BSE Case

On February 7, 2007 the CFIA announced that it had confirmed the diagnosis of BSE in a mature bull in Alberta. This announcement, although unwelcome, was not unexpected. Preliminary information indicates that the age of the animal falls well within the range of previous cases detected in Canada under the national BSE surveillance program, and the detection of this animal reinforces the effectiveness of this program. We expect to detect additional cases due to our high level of surveillance as we work to eradicate this disease from our herd. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is aware of this and is working with the CFIA in its investigation. A swift, yet thorough, conclusion of the investigation by the CFIA should enable USDA to proceed with Rule 2 without delay.

between the Chief Veterinary Officers of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, which Canada implemented last summer.

The second main thrust of the CCA's comments is that the USDA has over-estimated the number of Canadian cattle that would enter the U.S. under its proposal and therefore has over-estimated the economic impact on U.S. cattle producers.

After the comment period closes, the USDA must review and prepare

This Month...

- CFIA Feed Investigation
- Canada's 9th BSE Case
- Update on Rule 2
- Opposition to Rule 2
- Bluetongue-related Import Requirements Eliminated
- CCA AGM

The CCA is the National Voice for the Beef Cattle Industry, representing over 90,000 Cattle Producers

Update on "Rule 2"

The CCA will be submitting comments to support the USDA's regulatory proposal to allow for the importation of older Canadian cattle and beef to the U.S. by the March 12 deadline. The main gist of the CCA's comments will be that the USDA should eliminate the requirement for slaughter cattle to be born after March 1999. Elimination of this requirement would bring the USDA's proposal in line with a 2005 agreement

responses to all of the comments it receives. It is under no time limit to do this, but CCA hopes it can complete this step and send the final rule to the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) by sometime in May. After the OMB approves the final rule, the USDA can publish it in the Federal Register, to come into effect 60 days later.

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Opposition to “Rule 2”

Although we are optimistic about the implementation of Rule 2, there are still those who are working hard against it. For example, on February 21, 2007 the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, chaired by Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota held a hearing to discuss the importation of Canadian beef and Rule 2. Although the USDA presented a strong case on how moving ahead with Rule 2 makes sound scientific sense and that it is important to bring U.S. regulations into conformity with international standards, all of the other witnesses invited to speak were groups known to be opposed to the re-opening of the border.

Furthermore, state cattle groups in Washington State and South Dakota have recently exploited some minor administrative errors to suggest that the USDA is not doing all that it can to enforce existing rules regarding Canadian cattle. According to the Cattle Producers of Washington State, hundreds of Canadian cattle entered the United States without government-required health papers or ID tags, or they had tag numbers that did not match the accompanying health certificates.

Upon further investigation it is clear that the accusations were either unfounded or were exaggerated. Minor errors, such as misplaced paperwork and transposition of ID tag numbers have been corrected and never represented any animal health or food safety risk.

The CCA expects that such efforts to discredit the USDA and its proposal to normalize trade will continue. We will continue to provide factual information to our U.S. industry counterparts.

Bluetongue-related Import Requirements Eliminated

The CCA is pleased that the government of Canada has implemented new import regulations so that effective immediately, U.S. cattle can enter Canada without any bluetongue-related import requirements.

As one of its top priorities for a number of years, the CCA commissioned and funded vector research on bluetongue to better understand the risk involved with this disease. After careful analysis of this research, it was determined that the risks are negligible for a number of reasons, namely that the capacity to spread the disease is extremely limited in the Canadian environment. Bluetongue also does not pose a risk to human health.

The new regulations will use a permit-based system for most ruminant animals imported from the U.S. This system will enable the CFIA greater flexibility to modify import requirements and to be responsive to changes in animal health situations and international standards in a timely manner through adjustments in import conditions.



Dennis Laycraft, executive vice president and John Masswohl, director of international relations of the CCA provide useful information and statistics to the CCA delegation to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association convention in Nashville, TN on January 31, 2007. As an important event among U.S. cattlemen and key U.S. decision makers, it was important that the Canadian industry was well represented to ensure Canadian interests were not forgotten.

Mark Your Calendars for the 2007 CCA Annual General Meeting

The CCA’s Annual General Meeting will be held on March 27-30, in Ottawa, Ontario at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. All members are invited to attend this meeting and learn more about CCA policy and the direction the industry is heading. On March 28, the Board of Directors and VIP Reception will be held on Parliament Hill, bringing together Canadian MPs, senators and industry affiliates for an evening of dinner and discussion concerning the Canadian beef industry. If you would like more information, please call our Calgary office at (403) 275-8558.