

Confirmed BSE Cow in California

The USDA Chief Veterinary Officer, John Clifford, announced this afternoon that as part of a targeted surveillance system, they have confirmed an atypical BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) case in a central California dairy cow. The animal's carcass is being contained by state officials and will be destroyed. The animal in question was found in a rendering facility but never presented into the food chain and does not pose any risk to the food supply or human health.

Samples from the animal were first tested at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. The results will now be reviewed by laboratories in Canada and England who have extensive experience in diagnosing atypical BSE as well as California animal and public health officials and the FDA. Atypical BSE is a very rare form of the disease and generally not associated with an animal consuming feed as was thought to be in the 2003 incident.

Clifford emphasizes the safeguards the United States' has to protect our food supply against BSE. "This detection in no way affects the United States' BSE status determined by the OIE. The United States has in place all of the elements of a system that OIE has determined ensures that beef and beef products are safe for human consumption: a mammalian feed ban, removal of specified risk materials, and vigorous surveillance", stated Clifford.

The USDA continues to remain confident in the overall health of our national herd and the safety of beef and dairy products. As the process progresses, USDA will communicate findings in a timely and transparent manner.

Again, the animal in question was never released into the food chain and does not present any risk to the food supply or human health.