

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Since the finding of a dairy cow in Washington State which tested positive for BSE, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture has strived to be very pro-active. The department is working very closely with other state agencies, such as the Wyoming Livestock Board, Wyoming Department of Health and the Governor's office to coordinate our efforts. Together we have issued press releases to inform the public, provide key contact information and address potential fears from both an animal health and human health perspective. In addition, we participate continuously on conference calls facilitated at the National level to keep up to date with the current status of this situation.

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture will continue to work closely with APHIS and USDA as they resolve any and all consumer issues. Protection of the consumer is our number one goal.

We feel the current BSE prevention procedures and policies in affect worked. An infected animal was found; quarantines were put in place, and the food supply was protected with the immediate recall of the meat and rendered product. Trace back from the index cow is proceeding. The investigation will continue for many months to come until every single detail related to this issue is resolved. There will also be a continual review of current policies and procedures and as already witnessed many of these will be changed and/or replaced in an effort to improve the system or provide additional food safety assurances to the public.

You can expect this issue to be in the news for at least a year, and perhaps longer. It is essential for all of us to educate ourselves on this issue, stay informed and to the best of our ability make decisions which are based on sound science and facts. There are a number of sources available to provide you with updated information on BSE as well as other important food safety facts and we encourage you to utilize these resources.

BSE Information and Resources:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/dlp/BSE/bse.html>

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Bovine_Spongiform_Encephalopathy_BSE/

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/bse/index.shtml

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bse.html>

<http://www.bseinfo.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/bse/>