



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Washington, DC  
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FROM:

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*John R. Clifford*  
for  
MAY 5 2004

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*Wm Smith*  
MAY 5 2004

TO:

VSMT  
Regional Directors/AVICs  
Veterinary Services

SUBJECT: Policy statement regarding BSE sampling of condemned cattle at slaughter plants -- for immediate implementation

This notification serves to reaffirm, unequivocally, the protocol of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in response to any notification from FSIS of their ante-mortem condemnation of an animal exhibiting signs compatible with central nervous system diseases. This procedure is effective immediately.

APHIS policy is to sample all cattle condemned by FSIS on antemortem inspection for exhibiting signs compatible with central nervous system diseases, regardless of age. Once the FSIS veterinarian makes a condemnation decision, the animal is promptly and humanely euthanized. APHIS protocol will be to sample the animal promptly (if the animal has been euthanized, FSIS will have the establishment refrigerate the head if sample collection will be delayed). If APHIS does not take a sample the AVIC must document the name of the FSIS veterinarian and time of the conversation and must specify the reasons either the animal does not meet our sampling criteria or the sample quality is unacceptable.

For any condemned cattle that are sampled for BSE by APHIS, it is requested-- though not required--that they not go to inedible rendering until the sample comes back negative. They can go to incineration or a lined landfill in accordance with state and local requirements. As a practical matter, renderers will likely not accept animals if they know a BSE test is pending.

Veterinary Services Memorandum 580.16 is currently being revised to reflect our enhanced surveillance plan, and this policy will be included in the revised memorandum, which will be released by June 1, 2004.