

**Update by Dr. Peter Fernandez, Associate Administrator, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service and Dr. Barbara Masters, Acting Administrator, Food Safety & Inspection Service**

**May 5, 2004**

“The Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review (PEER), an independent investigations and review unit of FSIS that regularly works with the Office of Inspector General and the General Accounting Office, is rigorously investigating the circumstances of this incident on behalf of USDA. PEER continues to interview individuals involved in the events of April 27 in Texas and hopes to finalize its remaining work in the next few days.

“In the interim, USDA has issued a statement to all field employees (APHIS and FSIS) documenting and reaffirming the policy for testing all cattle showing any possible signs of Central Nervous System impairment on antemortem inspection. The statement is available at: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/BSE\\_APHIS-FSIS.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/BSE_APHIS-FSIS.pdf).

“USDA expects to establish a complete, factual account of this incident, while strengthening its BSE surveillance testing procedures prior to the program’s expansion in June.”