



OCA Weekly Update – January 9, 2009

Missed an Update? Looking for Something You Read in a Past Issue?

Visit <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/weekly-updates/weekly-update.asp> to download archived OCA Weekly Updates as PDF files. They are posted by 5pm on the day of issue.

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A) FarmLINK launch

Kawartha Heritage Conservancy, Ontario Farmland Trust, and FarmStart are pleased to announce the launch of FarmLINK Ontario, a web-based initiative to connect new farmers with land, mentorship opportunities and resources of all kinds.

At the heart of our website is a Matchmaker tool, which brings together new farmers who are looking for land and/or mentorship with farm owners who have land available and/or expertise to share. Visit www.farmlinkontario.ca to create an account and a farm listing or farm seeker profile. You can already search through lists of available farm opportunities and the profiles of farmers looking for land! If you have any questions about using FarmLINK's on-line MatchMaker tool, please contact Ali English at farmlink@farmstart.ca or at (519) 836 7046 ext 104, who will help you access this program over the phone.

Over the next year, FarmLINK Ontario will also grow to include an online resource collection for new farmers, established farmers, and all farmland owners. So it's a great time to send in your comments and ideas for us to consider as we work to make FarmLINK as useful as possible. You'll find a feedback form on the website, or call (519) 836 7046 ext 104.

B) Government Increases Export Opportunities for Livestock Producers

OTTAWA, Ontario, January 9, 2009 – The Government of Canada is expanding export opportunities for livestock producers by acting on the advice of the Beef-Cattle and Pork Value Chain Roundtables. The Government is implementing two key recommendations: to create a market-access secretariat, and to pursue commercially-significant access to beef markets as a first step to achieve full access as recommended by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

“Canadian producers want to make their living in the marketplace and this Government is working with them to tap new opportunities on the world stage,” said Minister Ritz. “The roundtables have provided excellent advice which will form the foundation of our continued work to open new markets and to level the playing field for our exports.”

Minister Ritz announced the creation of an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada market access secretariat to better co-ordinate government initiatives with producers and industry to aggressively and strategically go after new markets and keep pace with international competitors. The secretariat will include a range of trade experts to promote Canadian agricultural exports around the world.

The secretariat will work toward gaining expanded access beyond the U.S. for agricultural and agri-food products in promising markets such as Mexico, China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

The Government is also implementing livestock industry recommendations to pursue commercially-significant access to international beef markets as the first step in a staged process toward full OIE access.

“We agree with producers that Canada needs to get a foot in the door in many international markets while we remain committed to our goal to securing full OIE access for Canadian beef products around the world,” said Minister Ritz.

C) Training Opportunities

The Centre for Rural Leadership, in partnership with Andy Sherwood and PROGRESSIVE TRAINING.CA, is offering a number of productivity training and time management workshops.

1. Productivity Improvement Using Microsoft Outlook® (Back by Popular Demand)

This day long workshop on productivity training and time management solutions will help you integrate communications, tasks, activities and planning using Microsoft Outlook®. This workshop will show you how to reconfigure your task pad enabling you to focus on your priorities, how to communicate more effectively and how to fulfill and coordinate your commitments, all of which will contribute to a measurable increase in productivity at work and at home.

Past participants have indicated that this fast paced, high-quality training workshop has fundamentally changed the way they do business, use Outlook, deal with email, day to day tasks and time management issues. They note that this ‘change’ is immediate and ongoing and easy to implement and keep using in both your work and personal environments.

The cost of this day long workshop is \$545.00 with refreshments and lunch included. The workshop will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the ACC Farmers’ Financial Boardroom, Ontario AgriCentre, 100 Stone Road West, Guelph, on:

- Tuesday, February 24, 2009
- Tuesday, June 16, 2009

For more information and to register for this workshop please contact *The Centre for Rural Leadership* at 519-826-4204.

2. *Working Sm@rt with BlackBerry* (New)

This half day workshop on 'working smarter with Blackberry was created in conjunction with Research in Motion (RIM). Graduates of this workshop increase productivity and enhance on-the-job performance by knowing how to match the right process and skill set when using their BlackBerry devices.

The goal of this workshop is to learn how to apply Priority Management's workload management processes in a BlackBerry environment. In *Working Sm@rt with BlackBerry* participants will learn:

- Processes to manage email in a BlackBerry environment ;
- How to better use your BlackBerry with Outlook and get these tools "on the same page";
- When and why to use a BlackBerry... not just how; and
- How to make your BlackBerry a proactive tool.

While not required it is strongly recommended that participants participate in Working Sm@rt with Outlook prior to taking this course.

The cost of this half day workshop is \$395.00 with morning and mid morning refreshments included. The workshop will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the ACC Farmers' Financial Boardroom, Ontario AgriCentre, 100 Stone Road West, Guelph, on:

- Wednesday, March 25, 2009

For more information and to register for this workshop please contact *The Centre for Rural Leadership* at 519-826-4204.

Farmers Markets Ontario (FMO), in cooperation with *The Centre for Rural Leadership*, is offering the following workshop series during January, February and March 2009, in various locations across Ontario. Designed with Farmers Markets members in mind, these workshops are also being made available and open to the broader rural community, rural and community organizations and leaders of all ages.

3. *Tips and Tools for Productive Meetings*

This three hour workshop will help participants:

- identify the characteristics of an effective meeting;
- apply elements of good meeting planning;
- understand each participant's role in the success of the meeting;
- conduct an effective and productive meeting
- become aware of resources, strategies and tools for effective meetings; and
- create agendas that produce action and results.

The cost of this three hour workshop is \$20.00 with a hot meal and workshop materials included. The workshops will be offered on:

- Saturday, January 10, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Carp, ON
- Saturday, January 17, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Port Hope, ON
- Saturday, January 24, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Brampton, ON
- Saturday, January 31, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - London, ON
- Saturday, February 7, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Thunder Bay, ON

For more information, specific workshop location and to register for a workshop please contact Farmers' Markets Ontario at 1-800-387-3276.

4. *Create a Memorable Customer Experience!*

This three hour workshop will help participants:

- understand how to manage the customer experience, including first impressions and closing the sale;
- learn how to handle the difficult customer;
- understand and implement effective presentation methods for product and produce; and
- manage the role of public relations and event marketing to ensure individual vendor success.

The cost of this three hour workshop is \$20.00 with a hot meal and workshop materials included. The workshops will be offered on:

- Saturday, February 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Carp, ON
- Saturday, March 7, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Port Hope, ON
- Saturday, March 14, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Brampton, ON
- Saturday, March 21, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - London, ON
- Saturday, March 28, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Thunder Bay, ON

For more information, specific workshop location and to register for a workshop please contact Farmers' Markets Ontario at 1-800-387-3276.

5. *Meet the Media: Getting Their Attention on Your Terms!*

This three hour workshop will help participants:

- gain an enhanced understanding of how the media works
- learn how to structure and produce a news release
- learn how to get the media interested in a story idea
- by providing basic instruction on how to write for the media and templates for future use.

The cost of this three hour workshop is \$20.00 with a hot meal and workshop materials included. The workshops will be offered on:

- Saturday, February 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - London, ON
- Saturday, March 7, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Brampton, ON
- Saturday, March 14, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Port Hope, ON
- Saturday, March 21, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Thunder Bay, ON
- Saturday, March 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Carp, ON

For more information, specific workshop location and to register for a workshop please contact Farmers' Markets Ontario at 1-800-387-3276.

D) An Introduction to Organic Certification for Beef Producers Why do it? How do I do it? Who are the Certifiers?

Tuesday January 27, 2009: 7:00 pm, Millbrook Lions Hall

What are the New Canadian Regulations all about? This session will be specifically geared to beef producers.

Sponsored by the Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) and Kawartha Heritage Conservancy.

There will be no charge to attend. Please register by contacting Carolyn Geer, 705-439-2692

carolyn.geer@sympatico.ca

E) The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) presents: Finding the Balance – Interpreting Soil Tests for Organic Farmers

Saturday February 7, 2009: 9am – 4pm, Millbrook Lions Hall

While standard soil tests have been used primarily for inorganic fertilizer applications, organic farmers can get useful information from these reports. Bring along your soil tests and learn how to read them with organic production in mind.

Cost: \$50 for EFAO members, \$70 for non members.

Please register with the EFAO office, [Tel:1-877 822-0656](tel:1-877-822-0656), 519-822-8606 or email: info@efao.ca

F) An Introduction to Organic Certification

Why do it? How do I do it? Who are the Certifiers? What are the New Canadian Regulations all about?

Monday February 23, 2009: 7:00 pm, Millbrook Lions Hall

This session will be open to all commodities. Sponsored by the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Kawartha Heritage Conservancy. There will be no charge to attend. Please register by contacting Carolyn Geer, 705-439-2692 carolyn.geer@sympatico.ca

G) 2009 Managing Excellence in Agriculture Conference Harness the Energy

Turn opportunities into advantages.

Sheraton Fallsview Hotel and Conference Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario

January 28 to 30, 2009

Assessing the future. Investing in renewable energy. Achieving work/life balance. Managing financial risk ? just a taste of the featured topics at the 2009 Managing Excellence in Agriculture Conference.

The speakers featured at each Managing Excellence In Agriculture Conference are among the best in our industry. This year is no exception. Here's are just three of the many speakers scheduled ? Brian Hayward sharing his outlook for 2009, Bernard Vincent from Toma & Bouma Management Consultants identifying and capturing market opportunities and Moe Agostino, Senior Risk Management Consultant discussing the potential of renewable energy.

Hurry! Space is limited.

Take advantage of early bird savings. Register at www.farmcentre.com before January 6, 2009. For further registration assistance, call 1-866-492-1171 or email monique@confersense.ca

Detailed agenda online at www.farmcentre.com

H) Grow Your Opportunities - A Quest for New Farm Value - Red Meat Focus

Join us as we explore case studies highlighting how innovative rural and farm businesses developed their value-added ideas. Follow a new product from conception to integration into the marketplace. Workshop leaders will include private and public sector entrepreneurs and advisors sharing lessons learned and best practices in an energetic and open learning environment. Workshops are limited to 25 participants.

Pre-registration is required.

Cost: \$75 for both days. Hot lunch is included.

- Brussels Community Centre - Two Saturdays - February 7 and 14
- Petersburg - Blue Moon Restaurant - Two Tuesdays - February 17 and 24
- Port Perry - North Durham Police Station - Saturday February 28 and Friday March 6

Funding and support provided by: Ontario Pork Industry Council; Ontario Cattlemen's Association; The Centre for Rural Leadership; Canadian Farm Business Management Council; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

To Register contact Denise Mouter at The Centre for Rural Leadership by calling 519-826-4204 or register online at www.ruralleadership.ca and click on "Program Calendar".

I) Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program

The Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP), introduced by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), provides enhanced cost share opportunities for farmers who take action on selected environmental Beneficial Management Practices (BMP's) that play a key role in contributing to a healthy and diverse environment as well as helping sustain production and profitability on the farm.

We may not fully understand the place or value of a certain species, but, as stewards of our natural resources, we have a responsibility to help prevent its loss. Species at risk and agriculture have coexisted for generations.

However, the number of at risk species is increasing due to a variety of threats including habitat loss, pollution, competition from invasive species, climate change and over harvesting. Ontario's new Endangered Species Act 2007 came into effect on June 30, 2008. It recognizes the importance of voluntary stewardship actions by farmers and others in protecting species at risk and their essential habitats.

Farmers across Ontario may be eligible for SARFIP. This special partnership developed with federal and provincial governments, and farm organizations, provides *up to 100 per cent of the cost* for farmers to establish BMP's from the list of SARFIP eligible projects. Each one of the eligible BMP categories contributes to enhancing habitat and biodiversity. Practices deemed to provide the greatest degree of benefit are eligible for the maximum cost share.

The eligible BMP categories and cost share levels for SARFIP apply to 2008. Producers are encouraged to speak with a local OSCIA Program Representative for updated information on the possible continuation of the program.

For more detailed information on what is eligible for cost share in each category code, consult the booklet "2008 Project Eligibility Guidelines – Environmental Cost Share Programs available to farmers through the Canada/Ontario Environmental Farm Plan" printed April 2008, version 1.03 available from OSCIA or OMAFRA.

Who is Eligible to Participate in SARFIP?

In order to be eligible for the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP) for 2008, a farm business must satisfy all of these criteria:

1. Be a legal farm entity with a unique Farm Business Registration Number (FBRN);
2. Have a Third Edition Environmental Farm Plan deemed appropriate through peer review; and
3. Have selected a Beneficial Management Practice (BMP) from the SARFIP eligible list that relates directly to an action identified in the peer reviewed EFP action plan, and effectively moves a "1" or "2" rating towards a "3" or "4" (best) rating.

Application Process:

1. Complete a Third Edition Environmental Farm Plan and submit it to OSCIA for Peer Review.
 2. Forward a 2008 Project Proposal Application form to a local OSCIA Program Representative.
 3. Obtain "Conditional Approval" and "Final Approval to proceed with the proposed project" from the OSCIA Guelph office.
 4. Complete the project, pay all associated invoices and arrange for a final inspection with a local OSCIA Program Representative by December 15, 2008. The project Claim Form will be provided by the OSCIA at time of final project inspection. The applicable SARFIP cost share funds, plus those from the federal cost share programs (COFSP or GC), will be forwarded by OSCIA to the participant.
- The maximum contribution per legal farm entity by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources through the SARFIP is \$20,000.
 - The maximum federal contribution per legal farm entity for the Canada/Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (COFSP) and Greencover Canada (GC) combined is \$50,000. The maximum federal contribution from GC alone is \$20,000. These federal limits apply to all activity by a legal farm entity across all categories in the respective programs (i.e. not just the categories where SARFIP funding applies).
 - Producers who participated in COFSP or GC between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2008 will carry forward through 2008 any federal cost share received for projects claimed during that period.

- The federal and SARFIP cost share is available to eligible producers for new projects initiated on or after April 1, 2008. No cost share will be offered for project invoices issued prior to this date.
- All projects must be completed and operational, and a final inspection arranged with the local OSCIA Program Representative, by December 15, 2008.
- OSCIA will not approve funding allocations for additional proposed projects once funding for the particular program is fully committed.
- Funding from other sources (i.e. cost share programs not delivered by OSCIA) may be combined with SARFIP, but under no circumstances can combined cost share exceed 100 per cent of project establishment costs.
- There is no separate application process for the SARFIP cost share. If the farm business is eligible, the SARFIP funding will be automatically added when federal cost share is allocated by OSCIA.
- The 2008 Project Eligibility Guidelines and 2008 Project Proposal Application forms for the federal programs are available from a local OSCIA Program Representative, MNR Stewardship Coordinator, or Conservation Authority Watershed Specialist.

Local Stewardship Coordinators can be a good source of technical assistance.

For more information visit: www.ontariostewardship.org

Contact:

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association
1 Stone Road West Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
1-800-265-9751

www.ontariosoilcrop.org

More information on species at risk and the Endangered Species Act 2007 can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website: www.ontario.ca/speciesatrisk

J) OCA County and District Annual Meetings

Throughout January, 2009
(See OCA Web site for details)

K) 11th Annual Beef Industry Convention

January 8,9,10 2009
Hosted by the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association
Four Points Sheraton, London, ON

L) Lazy S Bull Power Sale

January 31 2009
At the Ranch Mayerthorpe, AB
Black & Red Simmental, Angus & Beefmakers
www.lazysranch.ca
(780) 785-3136

M) Canadian International Farm Show

February 3-5, 2009
International Centre, Toronto, ON
Visit www.masterpromotions.ca/canadian-farm-show.asp

The Canadian International Farm Show has a new focus, new ideas and a promising future. The show is now owned, managed and produced by Master Promotions Ltd, Canada's largest and leading producer of high quality industry focused trade shows.

Toronto's International Centre will be the venue for the largest indoor exhibition of farm products and equipment in Canada. They will come to see the latest AG technology and equipment displayed on over 400,000sq. feet, all on one indoor show floor!

Fresh ideas and a new look await you at one of the largest farm based equipment and technology show in the country, The Canadian International Farm Show.
Have a great fall & winter and we will see you in February!

For more information please visit: www.canadianfarmshow.ca, or call 1-888-454-7469, and show managers Mark Cusack mcusack@mpltd.ca or Rob Etmanski retmanski@mpltd.ca, would be happy to assist!

N) Willabar Ranch Ltd. Annual Long Yearling Black Angus Bull Sale

February 17, 2009

At the Ranch, Claresholm, AB **February 18-19**

O) Innovative Farmers Conference 2009

9-4pm

Best Western Inn, London, On

Cost: \$245 non-members, \$170 members

Deadline: February 12

Sponsored by: Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario

Leading edge, two day conference focused on Farm Management, growing Crops and Equipment Management in reduced and no-tillage farm situations. Speakers from Germany, US and Canada. R. Saik, S. Brownridge, S. Dutzi, M. Cleveland, P. Needham, V. Pierce, M. Hagny and A. Sherwood. Ontario farmer panel, round table sessions. CEU credits offered. Registration fee includes breakfast, two lunches and banquet with several refreshment breaks.

Contact: Megan Newcombe (905) 729 3254

February 24, 2009

3:30-4:30pm

P) Beef Improvement Ontario Annual General Meeting

February 24, 2009

3:30-4:30pm

DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, 655 Dixon Road, Toronto

Business Update and Financial Statement Review

Q) Pfizer Cattlemen's College (in conjunction with OCA Annual General Meeting)

February 24, 2009

7pm

DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, 655 Dixon Road, Toronto

R) Ontario Cattlemen's Association Annual General Meeting - "Close to Home"

February 25-26, 2009

All Day

DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, 655 Dixon Road, Toronto

Details to be posted as they become available. Please check back regularly.

S) Northern Powerpac Bull and Heifer Sale

April 11, 2009
2 pm
Temiskaming Livestock Exchange
New Liskeard, ON
For more information contact: Barry Potter
705-563-2752

T) Ontario Charolais Association Annual Meeting

March 14, 2009
12pm
Holiday Inn
200 Holiday Inn Drive
Cambridge, ON

U) Wanted: Outstanding Women in Agriculture

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is seeking nominations for the 2009 Rosemary Davis Award, which honours Canadian women for their leadership and commitment to agriculture.

FCC is looking for five women who deserve recognition for their achievements. She could be an agriculture producer, agribusiness operator, teacher, veterinarian, researcher, community builder, visionary, volunteer or have some other valuable connection to agriculture.

Candidates are judged on how they demonstrate leadership, give back to their community and Canadian agriculture, display their passion for agriculture, as well as their vision for the future of the industry.

The Rosemary Davis award was created and named after a successful Canadian agribusiness owner and operator and the first female chair of the FCC Board of Directors.

The winners receive a free trip to Boston to the 2009 Simmons School of Management leadership conference in May.

Winners must be 21 years of age and actively involved in agriculture. Online applications have to be submitted before midnight Jan. 26, 2009 to the Farm Credit Canada website www.FCCRosemaryDavisAward.ca. Previous nominees who did not win last year can reapply. Call 1-888-332-3301 for more information.

V) Grey Bruce Beef Day

January 12, 2009

Grey Bruce Farmers Week has been a main stay for the agricultural industry in Grey County since 1966. The featured commodities have changed as our agricultural focus has changed, but the mandate to educate local farmers and agribusiness has remained firm. The tradeshow is filled to capacity on several days. In 2009, Grey Bruce Farmers' Week is growing to a 6 day event. Ever changing to meet the changes in the make-up of the agricultural picture in Grey Bruce, we now have a full day committed to our Goat producers and those that want to know more about this industry. Please find the dates below. The event takes place in Elmwood Ontario at the Elmwood Community Centre, (link to a map) located approximately 1 mile west of the Elmwood Variety Store.

W) BIC Bits

BIC Partners with Various Foodservice Outlets

As an organization, the Beef Information Centre (BIC) strives to maximize demand for Canadian beef and optimize the value of Canadian beef products by strategically partnering with committed and reputable companies and industry partners.

Through its Partners Program, BIC has worked with a wide range of industry partners, including those in the foodservice sector. For instance, recently BIC partnered with Burger King in the marketing of their Angry Whopper. BIC's involvement assisted Burger King in developing over-counter menu boards, television advertisements, sign banners and in-store window posters.

According to Duane Ellard, providing assistance to foodservice outlets, such as Burger King, ensures more recognition and, subsequently, uptake of Canadian beef products. In addition, BIC's support shows the value Canadian beef content offers operators in terms of marketing their product.

"With this promotion, Burger King expects a double digit increase in sales of its Whopper family, which ultimately creates more volume demand," he notes, adding that advertising materials were prepared in both English and French.

BIC is currently working with a few other foodservice outlets via the Partners Program.

- Jack Astor's Bar and Grill (31 outlets in Canada, two in the U.S.) sought BIC's help through its Partners Program when it wanted to source AAA Canadian Top Sirloin for its new menu offering: an 8 oz AAA Canadian Top Sirloin Steak, butter-brushed, seasoned and grilled to perfection, and topped with sautéed fresh Laughing Bird Caribbean Shrimp and roasted garlic. The promotion ran from end of November through early January.
- Crabby Joe's Restaurants in Ontario (30 locations in Ontario, five more scheduled to open in 2009) will be featuring Canadian beef steaks on their menu for one full year, and their menu will also show the new Canadian beef brand logo. All Crabby Joe's steaks are sourced from AAA Canadian beef, and this is the first restaurant chain to support the new brand logo. In addition, Crabby Joe's is implementing the BIC Steak Doneness Kit in all their restaurants to help train their front end and kitchen staff.
- Husky House Restaurant promotion featuring King of the Road beef burgers. The promotion runs to the end of January at approximately 55 Husky House Restaurants from BC to Ontario (the restaurants are attached to Husky and Mohawk gas stations). The restaurant promotion includes in-store point-of-sale materials that feature the burger. This is part of a 12 month partnership with Husky House that will see them feature Canadian beef at their restaurants in January, July/August and Fall 2009.

BIC Partners Program is key to the success of Canada's beef industry, with programs leveraging the resources of many partners for the benefit of the industry as a whole.

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This report prepared with the assistance of Dr. Doug Powell's team at Kansas State University. This service does not allow emails to be sent by responding to this email directly. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lianne Appleby at lianne@cattle.quelph.on.ca

A) MEXICO joins dispute over US beef

05.jan.09

Shipping Digest Online

<http://www.shippingdigest.com/news/article.asp?sid=5791<ype=trade>

Mexico joined Canada in its World Trade Organization complaint against the new United States law regarding country-of-origin labeling for fresh beef and pork.

A 60-day consultation period between Mexican and U.S. authorities about the issue began on Dec. 18. After that, Mexico will be able to ask the WTO to set up an investigative panel. These disputes can result in punitive sanctions, but usually only after years of litigation, the Associated Press reported.

Canada's government filed its own complaint against the U.S. earlier this month, noting that it believes the U.S. country-of-origin labeling, or COOL, rules discriminate against Canadian agricultural exporters.

Canadian farm groups have asserted that a growing number of meat plants in the U.S. are refusing to accept Canadian cattle and hogs for processing since the rules went into effect on Oct. 1.

Under COOL, foreign cattle and swine must be segregated in U.S. feedlots and packing plants. Foreign animals are also required to have more documentation about where they come from, and foreign cattle must carry tags that indicate they are free of mad cow disease.

B) New genetic profile found in mad cow disease patient [UK]

By Mark Henderson in London

The Herald Sun

December 19, 2008

Fears that the human version of mad cow disease could cause further waves of infection have been heightened by the first case in a person who is genetically distinct from previous patients.

All the previous 167 cases and 164 deaths in Britain caused by new variant Creutzfeld-Jakob disease (vCJD) have occurred in people with a particular genetic profile carried by 42 per cent of the population.

However, a young man with a different genetic type has recently been clinically diagnosed with the incurable brain condition, BBC's Newsnight program reported yesterday.

Although the patient's diagnosis has yet to be confirmed by biopsy, the most certain method, his case offers the strongest evidence yet that at least 90 per cent of the population is susceptible to infection with vCJD through eating beef infected with rogue prion proteins.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/3flmnb>

C) JAPAN: Panel believes cloned cattle safe to eat

07.jan.09

Daily Yomiuri Online

The Yomiuri Shimbun

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20090107TDY03303.htm>

A Food Safety Commission working group likely will acknowledge the safety of meat from cloned cattle and swine in a report to the commission's higher panel, potentially paving the way for cloned meat to enter the market, government sources said Tuesday.

The decision was made after its subgroup of experts had concluded meat from cloned animals was as safe as that from ordinary livestock.

Once the commission acknowledges the safety of the meat, it is expected to open the door to the distribution of beef from cloned cows in the market, the sources said.

The commission is under the jurisdiction of the Cabinet Office.

Concerns have been expressed over the safety of cows and pigs cloned from somatic cells because of their higher rates of stillbirths and deaths soon after birth.

After examining reports and studies from around the world, however, the subgroup concluded cloned animals would grow healthy after they reached 6 months of age, according to the sources.

The experts could find no discernible difference between offspring from cloned pigs and cows and those bred conventionally.

The working group plans to notify the commission's Expert Committee of its conclusion by the end of this month.

The Food Safety Commission is then expected to submit a report on the safety of cloned animals to the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry by as early as the end of the year, according to the sources. The final decision will be made by the central government.

Several research institutes in the nation have cloned cattle from somatic cells. At the request of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry, however, they have refrained from shipping such cows into the market to avoid public confusion.

D) UK: New slaughterhouse requirement for calves

06.jan.09

Food Standards Agency

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/jan/calves>

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced the implementation of new regulations that require slaughterhouses to ask for information about calves received for slaughter.

The new legal requirement for Food Chain Information (FCI) applies to calves, which are defined as animals less than eight months of age. FCI includes information about the farm from which the calves came, their history of rearing and their health, including details of medicines they may have received.

The responsibility for obtaining the FCI will be with slaughterhouse operators. The FSA has worked closely with them and other stakeholders to develop guidance, which can be found at the link below, and to make them aware of the new requirements for calves, which were implemented on 1 January 2009. This follows a similar process that came into force at the beginning of 2008 where operators were required to provide FCI for pigs. Kenneth Clarke, FSA Veterinary Adviser, said: 'Food chain information is an important element of the farm-to-fork approach to food safety and can contribute to the application of risk-based inspection systems at slaughterhouses. We wish to encourage slaughterhouse operators to use the guidance we have published to develop FCI systems that best suit their businesses. We have a bigger task ahead to implement FCI for all cattle and sheep in 2010, and will continue to work with industry to produce useful and practical solutions.'

E) KOREA: Be kinder to cattle to get better beef

03.jan.09

JoongAng Daily

Kim Sang-jin JoongAng Ilbo

<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2899372>

In some ways, Lee Sang-mok, 42, treats a 28-month-old male cow like his own son. It shakes its head in apparent excitement as Lee gives its ears a good scratching.

Originating in Europe, the concept of animal welfare is meant to let cattle lead more pleasant lives until it's their turn for the one-way trip to the slaughterhouse.

Lee's organic cattle farm cooperative in Chahwang-myeon, Sancheong County, South Gyeongsang, is different from industrial-style livestock farms where cows have limited space to move about, a factor that increases their weight.

The barn is situated on 16,528 square meters (4.1 acres) of land. The sun shines through the glass ceiling. On the side of the barn, curtains move up and down, acting as ventilation openings. The barn's floor is covered with thick layers of sawdust and straw.

Each cow has 30 square meters to plod around in, six times more than the space recommended by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The animals are given water fit for human consumption and the farmer keeps detailed records of feeding.

"Cows grow up to be more healthy if they are reared with love in a pleasant environment," claimed Lee Mun-hyeok, 56, head of the cooperative. "Cows are animals that respond to kindness."

The cooperative farm raises 184 cows. Park Yung-geun, 51, a member of the cooperative farm, leads his cattle around a nearby hill for exercise. Cows are nurtured at individual barns for 18 months and then moved to a joint barn where they stay for another 12 months. Next stop: the abattoir.

In addition, the farmers don't use antibiotics or growth hormones, and the cow's waste is fermented and used as fertilizer for the rice paddies nearby. The farms have no time for chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Chahwang-myeon is located on the slopes of Mount Hwangmae, 340 meters (1,115 feet) above sea level.

There, farmers cultivate rice on 400 hectares (988.4 acres) of land.

After rice is harvested, the leftover straw is used to produce cattle feed, which is free of pesticides and chemical fertilizer.

Cows raised on the cooperative farm are certified as "organically grown" by the National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service.

Before their trip to the slaughterhouse, the cows are given a final shower and then transported in special trucks designed to make their final trip less stressful.

After all, care should be taken. A 700 kilogram (1,543 pounds) cow is worth 10 million won (\$7,598), double the price for a regular cow.

Following the outbreak of mad cow disease in the United States in 2003, Lee, the head of the cooperative, has promoted organic farming.

"No matter how many antibiotics I used, my cows still died," Lee said. "I realized that cows, like people, need a good environment and decent food to survive."

The Agriculture Ministry, South Gyeongsang Provincial Office and Sancheong County have supported the farm with a one-off 10 billion won subsidy.

"This is a new livestock farming model that offers safe meat and helps the farming industry," said Oh Seok-du, a professor at Jinju National University.

F) NEBRASKA: Mad cow rule may put farmers in dumps

02.jan.09

Omaha World-Herald

Leslie Reed

http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=2798&u_sid=10527808

LINCOLN -- Nebraska's state veterinarian is among those worried that dead cattle could be left to rot in windbreaks or ditches because of a federal regulation intended to prevent mad cow disease.

Mad cow disease is being studied in the lab, but work also must be done in the field, where livestock producers grapple with new restrictions on carcass disposal.

The new rule, which takes effect April 27, says cattle over 30 months of age can't be rendered for animal feed unless their brains and spinal cords are removed first.

The Food and Drug Administration regulation is intended to prevent the prions that cause bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, from slipping into livestock feed and causing an outbreak in cattle.

Prions are found in the brain and spinal cord.

The rendering truck is a popular method for disposing of cattle that die before going to market. But some fear that rendering companies may stop picking up dead cattle or that higher fees will discourage farmers from calling a rendering company when an animal dies. The result could be dead cattle that are illegally dumped.

"It's going to be a major problem," said State Veterinarian Dennis Hughes, who works for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. "We fear farmers are going to be hauling them into shelterbelts or ditches, to make good coyote food."

Although the rule will cause disposal challenges, the FDA maintains that the rule is needed to control the spread of mad cow disease.

FDA press officer Michael Herndon said more than 200 people have died worldwide from the human form of mad cow disease, including three cases in the United States that probably resulted from exposure outside the country.

"The FDA has an obligation to put control measures in place that will prevent the threats to public and animal health," Herndon said.

The regulation will have the most impact on the dairy industry — which accounts for about 300 farms and 60,000 cattle in Nebraska.

Milk cows, which are more likely to reach old age, are most productive after 3 years of age and can continue to produce until they're 15 or older. Beef cattle, in contrast, often go to slaughter before they're 2 years old.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about 4.2 million cattle and calves died before slaughter during 2007, roughly 4 percent of that year's Jan. 1 cattle inventory. Nebraska saw about a 3 percent death loss, or about 200,000 head. Iowa experienced about a 4.6 percent death loss, or about 185,000 cattle and calves.

Between 45 and 50 percent of animals that die on the farm go to rendering companies, said Tom Cook, president of the National Renderers Association. Rendering trucks travel regular routes to pick up animals from large farms and feedlots. Smaller operations call for the service when needed.

In past decades, rendering companies paid farmers for animal carcasses, which they boiled down for animal feed and other products. Today, most companies charge about \$25 to \$30 per head to remove an animal.

A rendering industry study said costs could go to \$45 to \$50 per head to cover additional labor and specialized equipment required to remove brains and spinal cords.

"It's safe to say there will be changes across the rendering industry," said Ross Hamilton, director of government affairs and technology for Darling International, a national company that provides rendering services in eastern Nebraska.

Cook said rendering companies probably will begin eliminating the banned material in early February so that their supply lines will be clear by April 27. He said he didn't know how many companies will adopt procedures to remove the material from older cattle and how many will simply stop accepting carcasses of cattle that fall under the restrictions — those older than 30 months.

Lonnie Johnson, owner of Nebraska Byproducts of Lexington, said he intended to continue picking up dead animals for his customers.

"If we don't do that, I have a fear we're going to see a lot of dead stock lying in canyons and ravines and that type of thing," he said.

Alternative disposal options are relatively few. Farmers can bury dead animals, which is problematic in areas with high water tables or in situations where more than a few animals have died. In some areas, farm dead also can be sent to landfills or composted — a controlled decomposition process similar to home gardeners' treatment of yard and kitchen waste.

However, state law limits composting to carcasses of no more than 600 pounds because of difficulties in properly composting larger animals. Although incineration is allowed, the facilities are expensive to build and lacking in the region.

Representatives of the dairy and rendering industries question the need for the new FDA regulation. They said that the chance of humans contracting mad cow disease from U.S. cattle is minuscule and that the new regulation is intended more to soothe the concerns of U.S. trading partners like Korea and Japan.

Mike Roder, spokesman for the Nebraska Dairy Industry Association, said it will be increasingly difficult for dairy farmers to deal with "downer" cows — animals who through injury, disease or old age can no longer walk. Such animals aren't allowed to be slaughtered for their meat, because of the possibility they carry mad cow disease or some other disease.

"I can't take her to market, and I can't have her rendered," Roder said. "When you're doing this for a living, the rules seem to pile up."

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G) AUSTRALIA: Beef Assoc slams foot and mouth plan

29.dec.08

Weekly Times Now

http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2008/12/29/37245_cattle.html

THE Australian Beef Association has slammed a recent recommendation to import live foot and mouth viruses into Australia for research purposes, saying a potential outbreak would be an "act of bioterrorism against our livestock industries".

ABA chairman, Brad Bellinger, said "it was unbelievable that the recently released Beale Report could make such a risky bio-security policy".

"The evidence is already on record that research facilities are not secure enough to contain highly contagious diseases," the ABA said.

"The escape of equine influenza from Eastern Creek and the transfer of the rabbit calicivirus from an island off the coast of South Australia to the mainland are just two examples of how porous bio-security can be.

"Even more alarming is that the source of England's most recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in Surrey points towards the Pirbright Research Centre that held stocks of the live FMD virus. This is the second outbreak from this facility, so it seems they hadn't learnt from their previous disastrous error in quarantine procedures.

The ABA said an FMD outbreak would cost the beef industry over \$10 billion.

"If the source of an outbreak of the disease came from a research centre that had intentionally brought the virus into Australia, we should consider it an act of bio-terrorism against our livestock industries," the ABA said.

H) UK: South east launches all-inclusive health scheme for cattle

29.dec.08

FWI

Jonathan Long

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2008/12/29/113496/south-east-launches-all-inclusive-health-scheme-for-cattle.html>

Cattle farmers in the south east will soon have the opportunity to become involved in a revolutionary animal health initiative aimed at improving the health and, hopefully, value of all animals in the region. Livestock Accreditation South East Region (LASER) will be an all-inclusive scheme with all farmers who are clients of a participating vet practice automatically becoming members, unless they specifically opt out. The scheme, run by the Animal Health and Welfare sub-group of the south east's Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy group will encourage farmers to identify and understand the health status of stock on their farm and offer accreditation for diseases of economic importance, explains one of its originators, Matt Dobbs of Westpoint Vet Group.

"Farms will be given different levels of certification depending on their disease status for a range of conditions, with grading running from bronze for the poorest through to platinum for the best. Additionally, farms will be able to enter into an ongoing farm health programme with regular vet reviews."

But while at first glance LASER may appear to be repeating the work already done by other health schemes, its intention is to link into existing national schemes, such as SAC and Biobest. "Members of these other schemes will benefit from LASER as it will allow them increased recognition of their efforts."

Under the scheme farms will be assessed by their own vet and certified for a number of diseases, including bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), leptospirosis, Johne's and bovine TB. "As progress is made in controlling or eradicating these diseases from herds the farm will gradually move up the status scale."

This approach should bring improved disease management and control and lead to increased economic performance, allowing farmers to achieve premiums when selling stock and hopefully, due to their geographical location, improved access to export markets, adds Mr Dobbs.

With most vet practices in the south east backing the scheme, the plan is for assessments to be conducted either alongside routine vet visits or, when required as separate visits. And, crucially, grading will be done on an individual disease basis, with bronze representing herds where the diseases present or of an unknown status, silver a herd where some disease control is in place, gold a unit which is managing or working to eradicate the disease and platinum awarded when stock are accredited free of disease.

"So, taking BVD as an example, when a herd has disease present and has partial, lapsed or no vaccination ongoing they will be classified as bronze. To gain silver status the herd would have to be vaccinated annually, while gold classification would require the herd to gain vaccinated and monitored free status. Platinum status, meanwhile, would signify the herd as accredited free of disease," explains Mr Dobbs.

However, while some may question the demand for such a scheme, a survey undertaken this summer of Surrey farmer Angus Stovold reveals an overwhelming potential uptake for such a regional health scheme.

"Of the beef farmers surveyed more than 40% didn't have a health plan, but more than 80% claimed to know their herd's health status. But, 82% said they would join a regional health scheme."

Despite this, though there appears to be a worrying lack of understanding from many farmers on several key issues, explains Mr Stovold. "More than 55% of those questioned said they had closed herds, yet 80% bought stock in and 15% of these didn't isolate new stock when they arrived and more than 60% didn't blood test new stock.

"It's impossible to have a truly closed herd and still buy stock in and when buying stock in quarantining them is essential to prevent ingress of novel diseases."

Among dairy farmers 90% thought a health scheme would be beneficial, but yet only 85% said they would join one, reports Mr Stovold.

CAP: The launch of a health scheme for cattle farmers in the south east should allow farmers to maximise both the productivity and value of their stock.

I) UK: Scientists fear new wave of human BSE deaths may kill up to 350

18.dec.08

guardian.co.uk

James Meikle

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/dec/18/bse-vcjd-victims>

Scientists were warning today of a possible new wave of deaths from the human form of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) amid fears the disease might have taken hold in a wider range of the population than had first appeared.

Chris Higgins, head of the group that advises the government on variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), suggested up to 350 people might die if it emerged that the long-incubating illness appeared to have infected a patient with a different gene type from previous British victims.

The first wave of infections almost certainly came from eating infected beef products after BSE struck cattle in the 1980s, although three of the 164 people who have died from the human disease since 1995 are thought to have contracted the disease from contaminated blood transfusions donated by people who were unwittingly carrying the disease.

The first wave of deaths peaked at 28 in 2000, and only one person has died from the disease this year. But Higgins, chairman of the spongiform encephalopathy advisory committee (SEAC), said that if another patient with the disease was found to have the different gene type, more could die.

All the people with vCJD so far have belonged to a gene type known as MM. People inherit either an M or V gene from each of their parents, which probably determines their vulnerability to the disease and the length of time it takes to develop. The MM gene group makes up 37% of the population, while those with one of each, MVs, are thought to be more resistant and make up 51% of Britons.

Scientists have long warned that a second wave of the disease was possible because of this. These views were strengthened when a person with the MV gene configuration who died from other causes a few years ago was found to have the infective agent linked to vCJD in their spleen.

Clinical tests suggest the patient involved in the latest case is an MV, but this will not be confirmed until a brain biopsy is carried out after death.

Higgins told the BBC: "This case has not yet been confirmed but, assuming it is, we would estimate that the number of MV cases at a maximum would be about 200 to 350. That, I have to emphasise, is a maximum estimate, because all the studies in animals suggest that MV gene types are likely to be far less infective than the MM gene type where we have seen the cases up to now. So it is probably between 50 and 350 new cases."

There is at present no blood test capable of identifying vCJD despite repeated claims one is imminent. Controls over the use and cleaning of surgical and dental equipment and restrictions on blood donations have been introduced to stop human to human spread of the disease. The danger from infected cattle is very small.

Seac advisers who want to identify how many people may be carrying the disease without showing symptoms have clashed with coroners who blocked plans to test thousands of bodies undergoing postmortem examinations each year for signs of the disease. They have said the coroners' reaction is disappointing because it could hamper attempts to establish the long-term public health threat from the incurable disease.

Because of the diminishing risk from food, the government is preparing to raise the age at which slaughtered cattle must be tested from 30 months to 48.

J) IRISH find high dioxin levels in beef, but no risk

19.dec.08

Medical Operations Collaboration and Communications

Shawn Pogatchnik

<http://medc2org.wordpress.com/2008/12/18/irish-find-high-dioxin-levels-in-beef-but-no-risk/>

DUBLIN, Ireland -- Lab tests on cattle at four Irish farms have found much higher levels of cancer-causing dioxins than initially thought, government agency officials said Thursday, but they stressed that the problem still posed no risk to public health.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland said tests conducted over the past week at an English lab found dioxin levels 100 to 400 times higher than legal limits. That conflicted starkly with an initial announcement last week that the contamination levels were two to three times above those limits.

The government ordered a global recall of pork products Dec. 6 after finding dioxin levels 80 to 200 times legal limits in pigs that had received oil-contaminated feed from a single Irish manufacturer, Millstream Power Recycling Ltd.

But European food safety experts subsequently declared that the tainted Irish pork did not pose a realistic health risk. And Irish officials insisted Thursday that the dioxin threat to its beef products, even though higher in samples, was even more minuscule.

As a result, the Agriculture Department confirmed that the only enforcement action required to minimize the public risk of dioxin consumption was to kill all the cattle at 21 farms that received the tainted feed. All cattle shipments at those farms had been frozen since Dec. 5.

In a joint statement, the Food Safety Authority and Agriculture Department said "implicated carcasses from any of the 21 farms" had been getting tracked down since Dec. 9 "and these too will not enter the food chain."

The Agriculture Department said investigations found that Millstream-produced feed was eaten only at those 21 cattle farms. Cattle at 30 others suspected of using the tainted feed were publicly cleared for slaughter Thursday.

The official announcement — which coincided with a major government press conference on Ireland's recession-hit economy — made no mention of the specific findings of dioxin levels 100 to 400 times above legal limits. It said only that the beef test results “were higher than those found in the pork products.”

The Associated Press received specific figures from one of the agency's toxicologists, Rob Evans. Other officials at the government's Agriculture and Health departments corroborated the figures.

“They're high,” Evans said of the dioxin levels. “We expected there would be dioxins but we weren't able to predict the ratio.”

He said last week's announcement, suggesting levels two to three times the legal limit, represented the level of “indicator” PCBs found in the meat samples — not the dioxin itself.

Evans said a range of factors — including the lower level of fat in beef than in pork, people's lower consumption of beef versus pork, and the greater ability to track beef products back to specific farms — meant that people consumed far fewer dioxins from the beef than the pork before the problem was detected.

The joint Food Safety-Agriculture statement also asserted that the number of beef farms affected, 21, paled in comparison with a total of 120,000 cattle farms in Ireland. That figure did not distinguish between farms where cattle are reared for beef or for milk production; the latter are not part of the human food chain.

The Irish food promotion agency, Bord Bia, says Ireland has 69,000 beef farms.

Dioxins are a family of chemicals that can cause cancer if ingested in sufficient quantity for a long enough time.

The dioxin found in the pigs and cattle was PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl. Once eaten it accumulates in human fat and remains there for many years.

K) EU wants sanctions justified in WTO beef hormone case (update1)

22.dec.08

Bloomberg

Jennifer Freedman

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aBDzCIE524bA&refer=home>

The European Union wants the U.S. and Canada to drop sanctions stemming from EU restrictions on imports of hormone-treated beef, saying the 27-nation bloc's laws are now “fully in line” with World Trade Organization rules.

Today's request for consultations comes two months after WTO appellate judges reversed most conclusions reached by a panel on the legality of the EU's ban on hormone-treated beef and dismissed a finding suggesting that the bloc's policies violate global trade rules.

“We are convinced that our legislation on hormones is fully in line with WTO law,” European Commission spokesman Peter Power said in a statement issued from Geneva. “The restrictions on hormone-treated beef are based on solid scientific evidence showing risks for human health.”

WTO judges ruled in March 31 judgment that the U.S. and Canada should scrap curbs on \$125.3 million of European goods including Dijon mustard and truffles that were imposed to punish the bloc for refusing to permit the import of beef treated with hormones.

The WTO said in February 1998 that the EU moratorium on hormone-treated beef -- in place since 1989 -- wasn't justified because the bloc hadn't scientifically proven a cancer risk to consumers. When the EU failed to end the moratorium after a 15-month deadline, the U.S. and Canada were authorized to levy duties on European imports including Roquefort cheese, textiles, onions and dried carrots.

Import Duties

The U.S. sanctions amount to a 100 percent duty on \$116 million of imports from the EU, while Canada targeted C\$11.3 million (\$9.3 million) of European products.

Appellate judges in October recommended that the U.S., Canada and the EU file another complaint to resolve the disagreement about the WTO-compatibility of the EU's hormones ban and the continued U.S. and Canadian sanctions. The U.S. said at the time that the appellate ruling “vindicated” the imposition of the sanctions.

The EU's refusal to permit the import of hormone-treated beef reflects its “better-safe-than-sorry” food safety policy, known as the precautionary principle.

The bloc pursued the same policy in biotechnology until 2004, outlawing the import of genetically engineered foods because of safety concerns and prompting separate and ongoing complaints to the Geneva-based WTO

by the U.S., Canada and Argentina. In September 2006, WTO judges found that the EU ban on biotech products was illegal.

L) UK: Update on beef from Northern Ireland

22.dec.08

FSA

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2008/dec/beefni>

The Food Standards Agency is today advising consumers not to be concerned about eating beef from Northern Ireland. Dioxin results from three Northern Irish herds affected by contaminated feed have been received, they exceed permitted limits but the risk to public health remains very low. Any cattle and beef that have been withheld since Tuesday 9 December will not enter the food chain.

This action mirrors the approach of the Republic of Ireland, which announced the trade withdrawal of some meat from the food chain on Friday 19 December, following test results showing dioxin levels above permitted limits present in meat.

The results of dioxin tests for the remaining five herds are still awaited. In the meantime, the cattle and meat from these animals will continue to be held on the relevant farms and at meat processing plants.

Meat processors have informed the Agency that there is no longer any affected meat in the shops, although some may have reached consumers before the notification of this incident. People should not worry as the risk to health from this incident is very low and retailers are not required to take any action to withdraw or recall products. The actual number of cattle farms affected represents less than 0.03% of the total number of cattle farms in Northern Ireland.

Dioxins are chemicals that get into food from the environment and are associated with a range of health effects when there is a long term exposure to them at relatively high levels.

The UK will continue to work with local authorities, the wider enforcement community and European Union member states to protect UK consumers.

M) UK: BSE testing age increases

19.dec.08

Northern Ireland News

http://www.4ni.co.uk/northern_ireland_news.asp?id=87285

Farming Minister Michelle Gildernew has announced that the BSE testing age will increase to 48 months for all bovines from 1 January 2009.

The announcement follows official confirmation from both the Food Standards Agency and Health Ministers that they agree with this change. The minimum BSE testing age for both cattle slaughtered for human consumption and fallen cattle will increase across the UK to 48 months from 1 January 2009. However, this only applies to cattle born and reared in the EU 15 member States.

Announcing the move, the Minister said: "This is good news for the farming industry in the North as there will be some 40,000 less cattle slaughtered for human consumption requiring BSE testing annually, with savings in the region of £400,000 to industry.

"However, I would acknowledge that farmers will from 1 January 2009 have to pay for the collection and disposal of fallen cattle from 24-48 months which will no longer require BSE testing. To help farmers adjust to paying for the disposal of these animals I am putting additional funding into the National Fallen Stock Company this financial year."

Bovines born or reared outside the EU 15 member States will continue to be tested for BSE in line with current surveillance requirement that is healthy cattle slaughtered for human consumption tested at 30 months of age, and at risk animals tested at 24 months of age.

N) AUSTRALIA: Cattle industry worried about foot and mouth research

23.dec.08

ABC Rural

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200812/s2453630.htm>

The cattle industry is worried the Federal Government will allow live samples of the foot and mouth virus into Australia for research purposes.

The recent Beale review of Australia's quarantine system made the recommendation. But Cattle Council president Greg Brown says even the slightest chance of foot and mouth escaping a laboratory is too great a risk to take.

"FMD would destroy this industry instantaneously and we would be a long time, a seriously long time, first of all getting back into a market and then recovering the markets that we have had for so long and have put so much effort into building."

The CSIRO, which operates the Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong, is declining to comment on the recommendations of the Beale report.

O) US: FDA planning to ban cattle brains, spinal cords from all animal feed

01.jan.09

AVMA

<http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jan09/090101c.asp>

Federal authorities are accepting comments on a planned regulation that would prohibit use of some cattle tissues in all animal feeds by late April.

The regulation published by the Food and Drug Administration is intended to reduce the risk of transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy by prohibiting use of brains and spinal cords from cattle 30 months and older in all animal feed. The materials are already prohibited from use in feed for ruminants, including cattle, sheep, and goats.

"The added measure of excluding high-risk materials from all animal feeds addresses risks associated with accidental feeding of such material to cattle, which could occur through cross-contamination of ruminant feed with non-ruminant feed or feed ingredients during manufacture and transport or through misfeeding of non-ruminant feed to ruminants on the farm," states a Nov. 25 update from the FDA.

The FDA is accepting comments through Jan. 26. The proposed rule is scheduled take effect April 27.

The regulation would also ban from animal feed the entire carcasses of all BSE test-positive cattle, the entire carcass of any cow 30 months or older that is not inspected and passed for human consumption and from which the brain and spinal cord is not removed, tallow derived from the prohibited materials that contain more than 0.15 percent insoluble impurities, and mechanically separated beef derived from the prohibited materials, according to information from the FDA.

Consumption of beef infected with BSE is presumed to cause variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans. The FDA also released in late November a report indicating that, of 7,876 firms that handle materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed, none had violations of the Ruminant Feed Ban that warranted regulatory sanctions during their most recent inspections, and 121 required voluntary corrective action. The firms examined by state and federal inspectors include renderers, feed mills, protein blenders, ruminant feeders, on-farm mixers, pet food manufacturers, animal feed salvagers, distributors, retailers, and animal feed transporters.



**Ontario
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If you would like to post your cattle industry news or event, send your information by Thursday at 4pm to lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca or submit through the OCA Web site: <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/calendar/calendar.asp>.

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