



VPP Beef Niche Market Cull Cow earns a premium - BCS #3



BEEF TRIM



Unworthy of selling into the VPP Beef Niche Market - BCS #1

May 2012

Southwest Region

"Walk-Through Question 199 A Livestock Owner's Certificate has been signed indicating no ruminant meat product has been fed (copy is on file.) **Yes No**"

Verified Premium Plus designated dairies answer this question every year when you achieve or renew your Verified Premium Plus status. You are being proactive and can show that you are protecting the consumers by taking pre-harvest safety measures to prevent BSE.

The disease - Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE is rare and has only been identified in the US 4 times.

Animals with BSE lose physical coordination, lose weight, and eventually die. Contact your veterinarian if you have any questions. BSE is a rare chronic degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system.

One way cows may contract BSE is from eating protein in feed contaminated with a spongiform disease agent. BSE is a protein material or a "prion" that causes the disease and can't be passed from an animal to a human by physical contact. Consumption of contaminated feed is the source of the disease for cows. Consumption of cow brains or the spinal cord can carry the disease a Variant Creutzfeldt Jakob (vCJD) to humans.

USDA veterinarians are at US meat packing and rendering plants checking cattle for symptoms of the disease. Any animal that displays signs is tested. In 1997 the US banned feeding byproducts from cattle to ruminants to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. (Meat and Milk does not carry a risk of infecting people.) The brains and spinal cord of

ruminant animals are removed at the packing plant to prevent even the slightest risk of the disease (vCJD) from entering our food source.

Your feed company that provides you with protein should provide you with the disclaimer you need for the walk-through - it will be on your bags of feed or if receiving bulk shipments it should be on the label stapled to your load ticket along with the amount of feed delivered.

Take the time to grab a label and review it. Towards the bottom of the ticket it will read something like, "...**product contains no ruminant meat and bone meal...**" This brief statement carries with it a quality assurance to you and to your community that you are doing your best to ensure high quality food for consumers. Put a copy in your file.

Take the opportunity to share the tag with your employees and managers too - so they understand and can offer informed responses if asked by community members what you are doing to prevent BSE, you are NOT feeding ruminant meat and bone meal to your animals!

When renewing your Verified Premium Plus audit, be prepared to mark YES to the above question. Know that your efforts, along with USDA's surveillance program, provides consumers with the safest food possible!

Your feed company is your direct link to BSE safe feed.

Got Certified Meat?

Number of Dairies Enrolled in Verified Premium Plus Beef Program with Caviness Beef Packers - 52

Number of cows enrolled - 183,062

Pounds of VPP meat produced - Over 4 million pounds / year