
Good News Department

The End Of Mad Cow Disease In The U.S.?

(NAPSA)—There's good news coming from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture about the threat of "Mad Cow Disease." At a recent speech in Washington, D.C., the secretary said that BSE, known as "Mad Cow Disease" presented "a miniscule threat in this country," thanks to animal health and food safety strategies in place in the U.S.

According to officials, the U.S. prepared for BSE more than a decade before the first of two BSE cases hit the U.S. in 2003. Those were the only two cases of BSE out of the 100 million-head U.S. herd and no person has ever developed a BSE-related illness from American beef.

In fact, 96 percent of worldwide BSE cases occurred in the United Kingdom and 89 percent occurred before 1997. U.S. scientists leveraged the British experience by traveling to the United Kingdom and studying their strategies. That helped the U.S. build "fire walls" against the disease in the states.

Today, scientists know which parts of cattle can pose a risk if an animal has BSE. In the U.S., those parts are removed and do not enter the food supply. By contrast, in the United Kingdom, officials initially didn't know which parts posed a risk and British consumers routinely consumed cuts like brains from BSE-infected cattle not realizing



According to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mad Cow Disease is now just a "miniscule threat" in the U.S.

that this posed a risk.

We went to school on the British BSE experience. As a result, we will never repeat it in the United States, said American Meat Institute (AMI) President James H. Hodges. "The beef we eat, like steaks, roasts and ground beef, is safe. These products have never been associated with a BSE-related human illness."

Hodges says that the risk of being hit by a truck and struck by lightning on the same day is greater than the odds of contracting BSE from American beef. "Consumers are advised to focus energies on safe handling practices aimed at preventing food-borne illnesses," he says.

For more information on meat safety, including cooking and reheating tips, visit www.meat-safety.org.