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USDA FINALIZES BOVINE IMPORT REGULATIONS TO MEET INTERNATIONAL HEALTH STANDARDS

On 1 November 2013, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced a final rule¹ that will update its import regulations for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). This BSE regulation is based on international scientific literature and standards established by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

BSE: IMPORTATION OF BOVINES AND BOVINE PRODUCTS

With this rule, commodities that are now restricted but pose a negligible risk for BSE can be imported. For example boneless beef presents a negligible risk of BSE transmission so as per this final rule, boneless beef would not be restricted regardless of a country's BSE risk categorization. However commodities that still present a risk of BSE will be restricted from import to the USA. This final rule will bring the US regulations in alignment with international recognized standards.

Humans can contract variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease from eating meat contaminated with brain or spinal tissue from cattle infected with BSE prions. The prions that transmit BSE are not destroyed in the cooking process.

Since the 1980's the United Kingdom has had more than 180,000 cases of bovines with BSE. In 1989, APHIS began to restrict certain imports that could present a risk of BSE. Since 1997 bovine and bovine products from the European Union (EU) have been restricted from being imported into the USA. This year the EU has had four cases of bovines with BSE. The US has had four cases since the 1980's. As of May 2013 OIE upgraded the USA to negligible risk status.²

"When this rule is in effect, the US will use the same criteria and categories as the OIE to identify a country's BSE risk status". The effective date of this regulation will be 90 days from the date of publication.



¹ [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)

² [Questions and Answers: BSE Comprehensive Rule](#)

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