



December 24, 2003 5:01 p.m. EST

2 Wash State Cos Violated FDA Cattle Feed Regulations

DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

WASHINGTON (AP)--Two firms in Washington state, where mad cow disease was apparently found in a cow, violated government regulations designed to prevent cattle from contracting the disease, records show.

The Food and Drug Administration said the violations were minor and posed no health risks, but an environmental group wants the agency to investigate whether those problems contributed to the infection of the Holstein cow.

An October 2002 inspection found that M&E Seed & Grain Co. of Moses Lake, a feed mill, violated FDA regulations that were enacted in 1997 to prevent mad cow disease, officially known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE. Those rules lay out procedures to prevent mammal parts from being mixed into cattle feed.

Violations also were found at a second company, RTK Producers of Prosser, a trucking firm that handles animal feed, in June 2002, but a March 2003 follow-up inspection found no problems.

Both firms had only minor violations that could be easily corrected, such as missing paperwork, according to Dr. Stephen Sundlof, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinarian Medicine. The FDA records don't list the specific violations.

DOW JONES REPRINTS

 This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit: www.djreprints.com. • [See a sample reprint in PDF format](#) • [Order a reprint of this article now](#).

RTK Producers failed to return a call seeking comment. A phone number for M&E was unavailable.

Larry Bohlen, director of health and environment programs for Friends of the Earth, said even the minor violations could be significant.

"Why list them as violators at all?" Bohlen said. "There must be some level of concern that they're putting our food supply at risk."

The environmental group on Wednesday said the FDA should investigate the Washington facilities.

"There is no excuse for cattle feed suppliers to be in violation of government rules to prevent mad cow disease," said Dr. Brent Blackwelder, president of the group.

But Sundlof said it was unlikely that those facilities had anything to do with spreading the disease. Since the brain-wasting disease, usually transmitted through contaminated feed, has an incubation period of four to five years, the cow likely contracted BSE long before the animal was purchased by its last owner, Sundlof said.

While inspectors uncovered minor violations at more than 100 companies, only two - one in Ohio and one in Missouri - had serious problems requiring government action, Sundlof said. Those companies were told to repair the violations and will be reinspected shortly to make sure the problems are corrected, he said.

Such serious problems could include failing to properly clean equipment to ensure that prohibited items don't wind up in cattle feed.

Since the 1997 rules took effect, the percentage of firms following them has risen from 75% to 99%, Sundlof said.

"Obviously we are concerned about contamination of cattle feed," Sundlof said. "We recognize that as an area where we have to be very vigilant. That's one of the major issues we focus on in our inspections."

On the Net:

FDA cattle feed enforcement web site: <http://www.fda.gov/cvm/index/updates/BSEInspec03.htm>

URL for this article:

http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,BT_CO_20031224_003690,00.html

Updated December 24, 2003 5:01 p.m.

Copyright 2003 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our **Subscriber Agreement** and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com.