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HEALTH

Third Herd Is Quarantined Amid Mad-Cow Investigation

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WASHINGTON -- A third dairy herd in Washington state has been placed under restrictions as part of the investigation into the country's first case of mad-cow disease, U.S. agricultural officials said Friday.

Dr. Ron DeHaven, chief veterinarian at the Agriculture Department, also said a decision on the first cows to be euthanized will be made very soon.

So far, about a dozen of the 82 cattle that entered the U.S. with the infected animal on Sept. 4, 2001, have been located. "The whereabouts of the other 70 have yet to be confirmed, but we have good leads on them," Dr. DeHaven said during a media briefing Friday.

The mother, or dam, of the infected Holstein animal may be among those still being tracked down, he said.

MAD COW HITS THE U.S.


1 See [full coverage](#)² of the first case of mad-cow disease in the U.S.

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Dr. DeHaven said the latest animal to be located was found on a dairy farm in Matawa, Wash. That facility was put under a "hold order" that prohibits removal of any animals from it pending further investigation.

Previously, two herds in Washington, including that of the infected cow, came under similar orders. "It would be safe to assume that ... some or all of those animals will need to be sacrificed" if only to allay public fears, Dr. DeHaven said of the first two herds.

"Even though we know with a very good degree of certainty that there's no direct disease spread animal to animal, simply being on the same farm there are some public-perception issues related to those animals," he said.

As yet no animals under the hold orders have been killed,

increased testing?

pending further investigation into how the infected dairy cow contracted the brain-wasting disease. Among other things, authorities are awaiting DNA tests that would

confirm the lineage of the infected cow and others from the same parents. DNA results from the infected cow are expected next week, Dr. DeHaven said.

Authorities in the U.S. and Canada now believe that the diseased cow was sired by semen from a bull in Canada. Semen from the bull is part of the DNA testing.

Mad-cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, is believed contracted by eating feed containing bones or other material from contaminated cattle. But Dr. DeHaven discounted reports that the source of suspected contaminated feed in the current case had been located.

As for a possible link between the U.S. mad-cow case and one in Canada last May, Dr. DeHaven said, "It's way too premature to draw any conclusions about whether there is a single feed plant, or even if there would have been similar sources of feed."

Mad-cow disease is a concern because humans can develop a brain-wasting illness, known as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, from consuming contaminated beef products. Although 153 people worldwide have contracted that illness, most in Britain, it has never been diagnosed in an American.

--Richard Gibson of Dow Jones Newswires contributed to this article.

Write to the Online Journal's editors at newseditors@wsj.com⁴.

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