



October 15, 2007

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the family farmers, ranchers and rural residents of National Farmers Union (NFU), I urge you to support and cosponsor S.J.RES 20 introduced by Sen. Dorgan to disapprove a final rule of the Secretary of Agriculture relating to the importation of cattle and beef from minimal risk regions.

As written, the rule would permit the importation of animals and animal products from countries with documented cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE); including resuming live cattle trade with Canada. Thirty days after the original publication of the proposed rule in January 2007, Canada's ninth BSE-positive case was discovered; the animal was born well after USDA's proposed March 1, 1999 age limit. Until Canada can demonstrate its BSE problem is under control, NFU contends it is premature to expand beef and cattle trade.

NFU believes American producers and consumers deserve better than what USDA is proposing. The following measures should be addressed prior to reopening the Canadian border:

- Canada can prove and verify their cattle herd and beef products are BSE-free;
- Canada can prove and verify 100 percent compliance with the ruminant feed ban;
- U.S. international beef export markets are firmly reestablished;
- Mandatory country-of-origin labeling is fully implemented;
- Rapid-test technology is provided to all domestic slaughtering facilities to provide stability to the cattle market, and another layer of confidence for the American consuming public, and
- A guaranteed economic safety net for American producers if the importation of cattle and beef products from BSE-positive countries negatively impacts domestic profitability.

Again, I urge you to support and cosponsor the Dorgan resolution and look forward to working with you to ensure the interests of American cattle producers and consumers are protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Buis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Buis" clearly legible.

Tom Buis, President
National Farmers Union