QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FEED BAN ENHANCEMENTS

Q1. What changes are being made to Canada's animal feed ban?

- Feed restrictions are universally recognized as the critical measure to contain the spread of BSE.

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is enhancing the existing feed ban by requiring the removal and redirection of specified risk materials (SRM) from all animal feed, pet food and fertilizers. SRM are tissues that have been shown in infected cattle to contain concentrated levels of the BSE agent.

Q2. Are SRM removed from human food?

- Yes. The removal of SRM from all cattle slaughtered for human consumption was the first safeguard implemented by the Government after BSE was detected in a Canadian-born cow in 2003. This measure is internationally recognized as the most effective way to protect food safety from BSE.

Q3. What tissues are defined as SRM?

- SRM include:
    - the distal ileum of cattle of all ages; and
    - the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia, eyes, tonsils, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia of cattle 30 months of age or older.

- SRM banned for use in feed, pet food and fertilizers are the same as those removed from all cattle slaughtered for human consumption

Q4. Why is the CFIA making changes to the feed ban?

- Surveillance results and investigations of cases indicate that Canada's feed ban has effectively reduced the spread of BSE since being implemented in 1997. However, even compliance with the ban's requirements left limited opportunities for contamination during manufacture, transportation and storage. In addition, the accidental misuse of feed on farms with multiple species could not be discounted. Enhancements to the ban focus on preventing potentially infective tissues from entering the feed system. By taking this action at the top of the feed chain, potential downstream risks associated with contamination and misuse are addressed. Removing SRM eliminates more than 99% of potential infectivity from the feed system.

- These enhancements will accelerate Canada's progress toward eradicating BSE from the national herd. Based on risk analyses, BSE eradication, which is estimated to have taken several decades with the current feed ban, should now be achieved in approximately ten years

- Canada's actions are supported by the international team of animal health experts that reviewed the Canadian situation. This team strongly endorsed the removal and redirection of SRM from the entire animal feed chain.

Q5. Why are fertilizers being included in the feed ban enhancements?

- Byproducts, such as meat and bone meal, have traditionally been used in feed and a variety of fertilizer and supplement products.

- Restricting the use of SRM in fertilizer products is intended to ensure that ingredients derived from cattle do not accidentally re-enter the animal food chain.

- As an added safeguard, fertilizers and/or supplements containing ruminant proteins other than SRM will be required to be labelled with the cautionary statement that the product is not to be spread on land grazed by ruminants.

Q6. Why is pet food being included in the feed ban enhancements?

- On farms where livestock and domestic pets may live together, cattle may be inadvertently or intentionally exposed to pet food. The removal of SRM from pet food addresses this risk.

Q7. What will happen to SRM, dead stock and condemned cattle?

- While alternative uses for these tissues and animals are continually being explored, disposal of these materials will likely be necessary in the short term.

- The Government has been actively collaborating with the provinces, territories and industry to identify and develop disposal and alternative-use options. The safe and sustainable disposal of waste materials is a shared responsibility of the generators of waste materials as well as federal, provincial / territorial and municipal governments.

Q8. The enhancements to the feed ban provide scope to allow for outcome-based approaches. What does that mean?

- The primary goal, or outcome, of the enhancements is the elimination of more than 99% of potential infectivity from entering the feed system. The default method for achieving this objective is the removal of all SRM; however, regulated parties may develop and propose alternative approaches, with supporting scientific data, that can be shown to achieve the same level of protection as full SRM removal.

- This will allow for scientific innovation and provide flexibility for industry, while maintaining a high level of animal health protection.

Q9. With SRM removed from the feed system, do cattle producers still need to use ruminant-specific feed?

- Yes. The enhancements remove almost all potential known infectivity from the animal feed chain. However, producers must still only use ruminant-specific feed for their cattle. Cattle can develop BSE by eating as little as one milligram of infected tissue. Furthermore, the science surrounding BSE continues to evolve and may at some point identify other cattle tissues capable of transmitting the disease.