RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Chairman to sign a letter opposing the proposed amendment to 9 CFR 93, 94, and 95 to recognize a new category of regions presenting minimal risk of introducing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States, via live ruminants and ruminant products and byproducts from such regions under certain conditions, as published in the Federal Register on November 4, 2003.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

None on this issue.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not adopt a resolution authorizing the Chairman to sign the letter. Authorize the Chairman to sign the letter as amended.
MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: JANET BIBBY, Supervisor District III

FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: LETTER OPPOSING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RECOGNIZE A NEW CATEGORY OF REGIONS PRESENTING MINIMAL RISK OF INTRODUCING BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE)
Resolution No. 04-123

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

ADOPTED THIS Order on April 6, 2004

ACTION AND VOTE:

 Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Chair to Sign a Letter Opposing the Proposed Amendment to 9 CFR 93, 94, and 95 to Recognize a New Category of Regions Presenting Minimal Risk of Introducing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States, via Live Ruminants and Ruminant Products and Byproducts from such Regions Under Certain Conditions, as Published in the Federal Register on November 4, 2003 (Supervisors Bibby and Pickard)

BOARD ACTION: Supervisor Bibby initiated discussion relative to the proposed amendment and concerns. Art Richards, Mariposa Farm Bureau President, provided input on this matter. Cathi Boze, Agricultural Commissioner, also provided input. (M)Pickard, (S)Bibby, Res. 04-123 was adopted authorizing the Chair to sign a letter opposing the proposed amendment as recommended, with the addition of a sentence as requested by Supervisor Bibby and including the following distribution: our legislators, Farm Bureau, Cattlemen’s Association, and R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America. The motion was amended, agreeable with the maker and second, to include a sentence suggested by Supervisor Stetson relative to timely and sound scientific testing needing to be implemented. It was noted that responses are due by April 7th and that the Deputy County Administrative Officer would distribute the letter. Ayes: Unanimous.

cc: Cathi Boze, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer
Mary Hodson, Deputy County Administrative Officer
Mariposa County Farm Bureau
File
Docket Number 03-080-1
Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS
Station 3C7, 14700 River Road Unit 118
Riverdale, Maryland 20767-1238

RE: Docket Number 03-080-1

To Whom It May Concern:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution today opposing the proposed amendment to 9 CFR 93, 94, and 95 to recognize a new category of regions presenting minimal risk of introducing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States, via live ruminants and ruminant products, add Canada to this category, and allowing the importation of live ruminants and ruminant products and byproducts from such regions under certain conditions, as published in the Federal Register on November 4, 2003. A single case of BSE was discovered in Canada on May 20, 2003, and resulted in an amendment to § 94.18(a)(1) prohibiting the importation of ruminants that have been in Canada and the importation of meat, meat products, and certain other Canadian ruminant products. On December 23, 2003, BSE was found in a single dairy cow of Canadian origin in Washington State.

Though it is highly unlikely that BSE could be introduced from Canada under the conditions of the proposed rule, nevertheless a prohibition on the importation of ruminants and ruminant products from BSE-affected regions is the oldest firewall protection against the introduction of BSE into the United States. Prior to once again allowing ruminant imports from Canada, the United States Department of Agriculture needs to conduct a targeted analysis of Canada’s livestock production practices to ensure that potential exporters are in full compliance with United States regulations seeking to prevent the introduction and spread of BSE.

It is critical that potential impacts on United States beef exports be taken into consideration as well. Because of the December 23, 2003, BSE incident United States beef exports were drastically reduced and many countries are still enforcing this ban. According to the California Cattlemen’s Association, countries accounting for 91-percent of the market for United States beef exports have closed their borders to United States beef and beef products. These continued bans are having a severe impact on the beef cattle industry which is being borne largely by small entities, including ranching families and feedlot owners. Resumption of trade is critical to the
financial health of the beef industry. However, small entities will not survive if cattle imports flood the beef market or if the reputation of beef consumption is jeopardized by inadequate screening procedures for imported beef. Producers throughout California and the United States have already experienced significant losses due to the BSE incident stemming from Canada. Furthermore, all aspects of the BSE are not fully identified and the United States cannot place the consumer at risk even it is "believed" to be a minimal risk. Most importantly, the proposed amendment includes numerous unknown references to the spreading of BSE and the threat of contamination to the general public. Until timely and sound scientific testing is implemented the proposed amendment is premature.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

GARRY R. PARKER
Chairman

cc: Congress Member Radanovich
    Senator Feinstein
    Senator Boxer
    Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
    United States Secretary of Agriculture
    Department of Food and Agriculture
    R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
    California Cattlemen’s Association
    Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner
    Mariposa County Farm Bureau