

FDA Bans Mammalian Protein from Ruminant Diets

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Why did FDA adapt the “Animal Proteins Prohibited from Ruminant Feed” rule? What is the rule?

It is to prevent the establishment and amplification of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States through feed and thereby minimize any risk to animals and humans.

The regulation generally prohibits the use of protein derived from mammals in ruminant animal feed. However, there are certain exceptions to this prohibition. Persons may decide whether to feed some protein material from mammals to ruminants because they are excluded from the regulation’s definition of “protein derived from mammalian tissues”:

- pure porcine (swine) or pure equine (horse) protein
- blood and blood products
- gelatin
- inspected meat products which have been cooked and offered for human food and further heat processed for animal feed use
- milk products (milk and milk proteins)

These materials are referred to as “nonprohibited material.” “Nonprohibited material” also includes protein derived from poultry, marine and vegetable sources. All other mammalian protein sources are “prohibited material.”

Persons may decide whether to feed products, such as tallow and other fats, to ruminants even if they are derived from mammalian animals because they are not protein products.

When does this rule apply?

The rule is effective on August 4, 1997. Products manufactured before August 4, 1997 may continue to be used until those supplies are exhausted but may not be used after October 3, 1997.

Are there specific requirements?

The regulation establishes certain requirements for:

- renderers
- protein blenders
- feed manufacturers
- distributors (including haulers)
- individuals and establishments that are responsible for feeding ruminant animals

What are the requirements for those feeding ruminants?

There are four requirements:

1. Maintain copies of all purchase invoices for all feeds received that contain animal protein.

If a feed intended for ruminants contains animal protein, the protein can consist only of nonprohibited material.

2. Maintain copies of labeling for feeds containing animal protein products that are received.

Bulk shipments of feed are commonplace and that labeling information typically is contained in the invoices for bulk shipments. In those instances, maintenance of the invoice is sufficient. Feed may also be received in bags or other containers that have attached labeling. In those instances, the labeling should be removed and retained.

3. Make copies of the invoices and labeling available for inspection and copying by FDA.
4. Maintain the records for a minimum of one year from date of receipt of the product.

Other details?

Feed and feed ingredients not containing animal proteins are not subject to the regulation.

On-farm mills are subject to more stringent requirements; they should see the specifics for "Protein blenders, feed manufacturers and distributors" in the rule.

Persons who feed or intend to feed prohibited material to ruminant animals are subject to regulatory action. Regulatory action could include seizure of inventory, injunction against feeding prohibited material to ruminants, or prosecution.

The cattle and sheep industries in the U.S. want to do everything possible that will logically keep BSE out of the U.S. or from spreading if one case ever occurred. This regulation would have kept BSE from becoming an epidemic in the United Kingdom had it been in place there when BSE first appeared.