



NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION®

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Statement

By

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The House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform, chaired by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA), and Ranking Minority Member Henry Waxman (D-CA), held a hearing on Tuesday, February 17, and received information from the Government Accountability Project (GAP), a nonprofit organization that works with whistleblowers, that raises serious questions about USDA's surveillance program for BSE, and the specific circumstances surrounding the cow that tested positive that was slaughtered at Vern's Moses Lake Meats, a small USDA-inspected establishment, in Washington State.

Congressmen Davis and Waxman have written to Agriculture Secretary Veneman and expressed their concern about contradictions between the evidence that their Committee has received from the co-manager of Vern's Moses Lake, one of the workers at the plant, the livestock hauler who reportedly transported the Holstein cow from the dairy farm to the slaughter plant, and the statements by USDA, including statements by the Secretary herself. The Congressmen requested a response by March 2. A copy of Congressman's letter and a copy of an affidavit and other documents submitted to the Committee by GAP may be viewed on NMA's website at: <http://www.nmaonline.org/html/letter.htm> and <http://www.nmaonline.org/html/affidavit.htm>, respectively.

NMA has written to the Secretary today and urged her to immediately request an investigation by the Office of USDA's Inspector General.

A central question that needs to be answered, because of questions raised, is whether the Holstein cow that tested positive was appropriately part of the target constituency for BSE sampling. An independent and rigorous investigation of the facts is needed. We hope the Secretary will respond without delay.