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Mad Cow Disease (PUBLIC HANDOUT)

What is “Mad Cow” Disease?

“Mad Cow” disease, also known as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, is an illness relating to the nervous system of cattle that results from an infection.

Is “Mad Cow” Disease a foodborne hazard in the United States?

The risk to human health from “Mad Cow” disease in the United States is extremely low. Strong evidence shows that “Mad Cow” disease has been spread to humans in the United Kingdom causing another form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Is the incidence of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease being monitored in the United States?

Yes. The CDC, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, monitors the trends and current incidence of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the United States by reviewing death certificate information.

Has the CDC initiated efforts to monitor whether the alternate form of Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease is occurring in the United States?

Yes, the CDC has an Emerging Infections Program.

Is “Mad Cow” Disease a foodborne hazard for travelers to Europe?

The current risk of “Mad Cow” disease among travelers to Europe is extremely small.

All information in this document pertaining to “Mad Cow” disease has come from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/bse/> .