



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

**News advisory**  
**12/30/03**

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## **Governor Bill Richardson announces Mad Cow Initiatives**

*Santa Fe-* Governor Richardson issued the following statement today at a press conference:

“We have focused on two things. We want to do everything possible to make clear that in the United States, New Mexico - Mexico border region, there is no Mad Cow infection and New Mexico-Mexico trade in cattle and meat should resume as soon as that is confirmed.

We also conferred to make certain that we have not overlooked any appropriate responses or avenues of communication on this problem. New Mexico will do everything possible to ensure that the border region remains disease-free.

## **Governor urges change in trade policy to allow non-affected states to continue trade**

I have already spoken with United States Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and with Mexico Agricultural Secretary Javier Uzabiaga Arroyo, urging them to stabilize the situation and expedite allowing our border livestock industry to resume trade.

Last week’s Mad Cow case occurred geographically just about as far north of the U.S.-Mexico border as you can go and still be in the United States. We must help our national governments recognize our isolation - and consequent safety - and minimize the economic harm to the industry on both sides of the border.

The current system punishes the innocent with the guilty. All states are impacted, when only a few are involved. New Mexico should not be held hostage to an outdated trade policy.

There are three things I want to emphasize to help New Mexicans understand the significance to us of the first Mad Cow case reported in Washington State last week.

--FIRST: The discovery of a single cow infected with BSE --Mad Cow disease - is now impacting the New Mexico economy - even though there is no evidence of any BSE in New Mexico.

--SECOND: New Mexico, as part of my Homeland Security initiatives, has in place procedures and contingency plans to guarantee a swift and decisive reaction to any indication that BSE, or any other biological threat, had appeared in New Mexico. I named a bio-security chief, Jeff Witte, last November.

--THIRD: We have already initiated several additional measures in response to last week's events to further ensure the safety of the consumers and the cattle-growing and dairy industries in New Mexico.

### **Governor Richardson recommends five initiatives**

Agriculture Secretary Miley Gonzalez and Homeland Security Director General Annette Sobel will speak in a moment about the New Mexico context and what they have already put in place to deal with situations such as this. In the meantime, I have launched the following initiatives:

#### **1) Better Tracking**

I have asked the Department of Agriculture to study the feasibility of requiring the implantation of a tiny microchip in every cow in New Mexico. These chips, identical to the technology already in use to mark household pets, can be read by a hand-held device, enabling the quick and precise identification and tracking of the animal. Tracking cattle is key to swift response in isolating BSE and limiting the impact of a single case - as well as providing continuing reassurance to consumers of New Mexico beef.

#### **2) Better Cross-Border Cooperation and Planning**

I will ask State Veterinarian Steven England to meet with veterinarians from the State Livestock Board, the Department of Health, New Mexico State University and their counterparts in Mexico, to serve as an advisory group to come up with a long-term strategy for dealing with Mad Cow or any other disease that might impact New Mexico in the future.

#### **3) Early Detection**

I have asked Gen. Sobel, in consultation with subject matter experts, to design and conduct early detection programs for containment and quarantine of animals, should the need arise.

**4) Early Warning**

I support the Sentinel Surveillance System already in place at the Santa Theresa border crossing in southern New Mexico. This is an early warning system to detect sick animals before they enter the market

**4) Rapid Response System**

I have asked the Livestock Board to strengthen its Rapid Response Teams for the fast testing of livestock and have directed Gen. Sobel and Public Safety Secretary John Denko to enhance the capability of these teams to work more closely with public safety officials and first responders.

Again, I caution that all this is in PREPARATION for responding to any potential occurrence of BSE in New Mexico. I stress, however, we have no Mad Cow cases to deal with in the state at present.”