

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service****9 CFR Part 94****[Docket No. 02-004-1]****Change in Disease Status of Austria Because of BSE****AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Interim rule and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are amending the regulations by adding Austria to the list of regions where bovine spongiform encephalopathy exists because the disease has been detected in a native-born animal in that country. Austria has been listed among the regions that present an undue risk of introducing bovine spongiform encephalopathy into the United States. Therefore, the effect of this action is a continued restriction on the importation of ruminants, meat, meat products, and certain other products of ruminants that have been in Austria. This action is necessary in order to update the disease status of Austria regarding bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

DATES: This interim rule was effective December 13, 2001. We will consider all comments we receive that are postmarked, delivered, or e-mailed by May 20, 2002.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02-004-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02-004-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 02-004-1" on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Gary Colgrove, Chief Staff Veterinarian, Sanitary Issues Management Staff, National Center for Import and Export, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 38, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-4356.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The regulations in 9 CFR parts 93, 94, 95, and 96 (referred to below as the regulations) govern the importation of certain animals, birds, poultry, meat, other animal products and byproducts, hay, and straw into the United States in order to prevent the introduction of various animal diseases, including bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

BSE is a neurological disease of cattle and is not known to exist in the United States. It appears that BSE is primarily spread through the use of ruminant feed containing protein and other products from ruminants infected with BSE. Therefore, BSE could become established in the United States if materials carrying the BSE agent, such as certain meat, animal products, and animal byproducts from ruminants, were to be imported into the United States and fed to ruminants in the United States. BSE could also become established in the United States if ruminants with BSE were imported into the United States.

Sections 94.18, 95.4, and 96.2 of the regulations prohibit or restrict the importation of certain meat and other animal products and byproducts from ruminants that have been in regions in which BSE exists or in which there is an undue risk of introducing BSE into the United States.

Paragraph (a)(1) of § 94.18 lists the regions in which BSE exists. Paragraph (a)(2) lists the regions that present an undue risk of introducing BSE into the United States because their import requirements are less restrictive than those that would be acceptable for import into the United States and/or because the regions have inadequate surveillance. Paragraph (b) of § 94.18 prohibits the importation of fresh, frozen, and chilled meat, meat products, and most other edible products of ruminants that have been in any region listed in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2).

Paragraph (c) of § 94.18 restricts the importation of gelatin derived from ruminants that have been in any of these regions. Section 95.4 prohibits or restricts the importation of certain byproducts from ruminants that have been in any of those regions, and § 96.2 prohibits the importation of casings, except stomach casings, from ruminants that have been in any of these regions. Additionally, the regulations in 9 CFR part 93 pertaining to the importation of live animals provide that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service may deny the importation of ruminants from regions where a communicable disease such as BSE exists and from regions that present risks of introducing communicable diseases into the United States (see § 93.404(a)(3)).

Austria has been among the regions listed in § 94.18(a)(2), which are regions that present an undue risk of introducing BSE into the United States. However, on December 13, 2001, a case of BSE was confirmed in a native-born animal in Austria. Therefore, in order to update the disease status of Austria regarding BSE, we are amending the regulations by removing Austria from the list in § 94.18(a)(2) of regions that present an undue risk of introducing BSE into the United States and adding Austria to the list in § 94.18(a)(1) of regions where BSE is known to exist. The effect of this action is a continued restriction on the importation of ruminants, meat, meat products, and certain other products and byproducts of ruminants that have been Austria. We are making these amendments effective retroactively to December 13, 2001, which is the date that BSE was confirmed in a native-born animal in Austria.

Emergency Action

This rulemaking is necessary on an emergency basis to update the disease status of Austria regarding BSE. Under these circumstances, the Administrator has determined that prior notice and opportunity for public comment are contrary to the public interest and that there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553 for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

We will consider comments we receive during the comment period for this interim rule (see **DATES** above). After the comment period closes, we will publish another document in the **Federal Register**. The document will include a discussion of any comments we receive and any amendments we are making to the rule as a result of the comments.

Executive Order 12866 and Regulatory Flexibility Act

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12866. For this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived its review process required by Executive Order 12866.

We are amending the regulations by adding Austria to the list of regions where BSE exists because the disease has been detected in a native-born animal in that region. Austria has been listed among the regions that present an undue risk of introducing BSE into the United States. Regardless of which of the two lists a region is on, the same restrictions apply to the importation of ruminants and meat, meat products, and most other products and byproducts of ruminants that have been in the region. Therefore, this action, which is necessary in order to update the disease status of Austria regarding BSE, will not result in any change in the restrictions that apply to the importation of ruminants and meat, meat products, and certain other products and byproducts of ruminants that have been in Austria.

Under these circumstances, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. This rule: (1) Preempts all State and local laws and regulations that are inconsistent with this rule; (2) has retroactive effect to December 13, 2001; and (3) does not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This interim rule contains no information collection or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

List of Subjects in 9 CFR Part 94

Animal diseases, Imports, Livestock, Meat and meat products, Milk, Poultry and poultry products, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Accordingly, we are amending 9 CFR part 94 as follows:

PART 94—RINDERPEST, FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE, FOWL PEST (FOWL PLAGUE), EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE, AFRICAN SWINE FEVER, HOG CHOLERA, AND BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY: PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED IMPORTATIONS

1. The authority citation for part 94 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 450, 7711, 7712, 7713, 7714, 7751, and 7754; 19 U.S.C. 1306; 21 U.S.C. 111, 114a, 134a, 134b, 134c, 134f, 136, and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 42 U.S.C. 4331 and 4332; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

§ 94.18 [Amended]

2. Section 94.18 is amended as follows:

- a. In paragraph (a)(1), by adding, in alphabetical order, the word "Austria,".
- b. In paragraph (a)(2), by removing the word "Austria,".

Done in Washington, DC, this 14th day of March, 2002.

Bobby R. Acord,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 02-6693 Filed 3-19-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-U

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**11 CFR Parts 100, 104, and 109**

[Notice 2002-3]

Independent Expenditure Reporting

AGENCY: Federal Election Commission.

ACTION: Final rules and transmittal of regulations to Congress.

SUMMARY: The Federal Election Commission is revising its regulations to implement statutory changes to the deadlines for filing certain reports of independent expenditures. Under the new law, reports of last minute independent expenditures ("24-hour reports") must be actually received by the Commission or the Secretary of the Senate's office within 24 hours of the time the independent expenditure was made. To assist those who must meet this new reporting deadline, the revised rules allow reports of last minute independent expenditures to be filed by facsimile machine or electronic mail, unless the filer participates in the Commission's electronic filing program. Electronic filers must continue to file all reports of independent expenditures (24-hour reports as well as regularly scheduled reports) using the Commission's electronic filing system. Further information is provided in the supplementary information that follows.

DATES: Further action, including the announcement of an effective date, will be taken after these regulations have been before Congress for 30 legislative days. 2 U.S.C. 438(d). A document announcing the effective date will be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosemary C. Smith, Assistant General Counsel, or Ms. Cheryl Fowle, Attorney, 999 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20463, (202) 694-1650 or (800) 424-9530.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Commission is issuing revised regulations at 11 CFR 100.19, 104.4, 104.5, 104.14, 104.18, 109.1 and 109.2. These revised rules implement Public Law 106-346 (Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, 114 Stat. 1356 (2000)), which amended the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, 2 U.S.C. 431 *et seq.*, ("the Act" or "FECA"). Paragraphs (b) and (c) of 2 U.S.C. 434 require political committees and other persons making independent expenditures to file reports or statements if their independent expenditures exceed \$250. In addition, if independent expenditures of \$1,000 or more are made less than twenty (20) days but more than twenty-four (24) hours before the day of an election, an additional statement must be filed within 24 hours. Public Law 106-346 required, *inter alia*, the Commission to issue rules requiring that reports of independent expenditures made less than twenty (20) days but more than twenty-four (24) hours before an election ("24-hour reports") be *received* by the Commission or the Secretary of the Senate, as appropriate,¹ within 24 hours of the time the independent expenditure was made. The statutory change permits those who must file 24-hour reports to do so using facsimile machines or electronic mail, except for those required to file electronically (*see* 11 CFR 104.18). In addition to their 24-hour reports, persons other than political committees may file by fax or e-mail other reports of independent expenditures in accordance with the regular filing schedule (*see* 11 CFR 104.5). Public Law 106-346 also requires the Commission to provide methods of verification of documents (other than requiring a signature on the document) for all purposes, including submission under penalty of perjury. These new filing methods are intended

¹ The Secretary of the United States Senate Office of Public Records is the proper recipient of reports of independent expenditures that either support or oppose only candidates for the United States Senate. 11 CFR 104.4(c)(2).