

The Kitchener-Waterloo Record  
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Letter to the Editor

## **My Facts Still Stand**

By Bradford Duplisea

My letter of Sept. 12 regarding false statements about mad cow disease made by the Ontario Cattlemen's Association prompted a response from its big brother, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA).

Record readers may recall that in her excitement to accuse me of working for the Canadian Labour Congress (which I do not), Cindy McCreath of the CCA sidestepped virtually every charge I made in my letter.

I am an Ottawa-based independent researcher who often works for the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC), a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Canada's public health care system. The CHC Web site has documentation ([www.healthcoalition.ca/bse.html](http://www.healthcoalition.ca/bse.html)) that supports every claim made in my letter.

Specifically, throughout the 1990s, Canada imported potentially contaminated feed materials from countries with mad cow disease.

Federal law still permits cattle to be fed materials from other rendered cattle, and pigs and chickens, fed on rendered cattle material, are allowed to be rendered and fed back to cattle. In 1993, Canada imported 400 British cattle, one of which was found to have mad cow disease. The government tried -- but failed -- to track down the entire herd. A European scientific committee documented that 11 suspect cattle wound up in the Canadian "food or feed chain."

In her letter, McCreath expressed concern that I might be pushing for more food inspectors. This position probably gives little comfort to consumers.

**Bradford Duplisea**  
**Hull, Que.**

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# Beware of mad cow

By Bradford Duplisea

Mike Buis, president of the Ontario Cattleman's Association would have Canadians believe that Canada is "BSE-free" and that government and industry are doing everything they can to prevent the spread of this hideous disease, as he wrote in his Aug. 22 letter, Canadians Can Rest Assured That Beef Is Safe.

If only this were true.

Not too long ago Germany, France, Belgium and Italy had all pronounced they, too, were "free" of mad cow disease. Mad cow disease has since been documented in all those countries and many more.

If Canada is, indeed, "free" of mad cow disease, it is a small miracle indeed. According to Britain's U.K. Customs and Excise Agency, throughout the 1990s, Canada imported 125,000 kilograms of British meat and bone meal after it had been identified as a "likely" cause of mad cow disease. Worse yet, Statistics Canada documentation shows that more than 2.8 million kilograms of this potentially contaminated animal feed material was imported after 1996 -- after it was established that humans could contract new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) from eating infected cattle.

Alberta actually imported a live cow with mad cow disease back in 1993. The Canadian government raced to destroy the "mad" cow -- along with more than 400 other cattle from the same herd -- but some cattle slipped through the cracks. A report by the European Union's scientific committee noted that "11 imported cattle that were found to be carrying a risk of being infected (with mad cow disease) entered the Canadian food or feed chain."

The Globe and Mail recently reported that CFIA officials were sent "scrambling" to track down 20 cattle imported from Japan, which had been diagnosed with its first case of mad cow disease. Once again, Ottawa failed to track down all the animals. It was later realized that four of the suspect cattle had been slaughtered and may have entered the Canadian food supply.

Buis said Canada's level of testing for mad cow disease exceeded international recommendations. Nothing could be further from the truth. Shockingly, only 900 cattle were tested last year for mad cow disease. That is less than 0.0001 per cent of Canada's beef cattle herd which numbers 11 million. To put this in perspective, European countries were testing up to 20,000 cattle per week in an attempt to detect and eradicate the horrific disease. By only testing 900 cattle a year, we are putting Canadians at risk.

Buis also claimed that cannibalistic feeding practices that spread mad cow disease were illegal in Canada. This, too, is patent nonsense. Under Canadian law it is presently legal for cattle to be fed a diet derived from mammal "blood, gelatin, rendered animal fat or their products." In other words, cattle blood and other materials are still being processed into feed. It is also legal for pigs and chickens, fed on rendered cattle materials, to be rendered and fed back to cattle.

Don't listen to the Ontario Cattleman, the threat of mad cow disease is real.