



Poultry Litter Feeding Ban: Implications of the 2nd Interim Rule for Animal Feeding¹

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On January 26, 2004, the FDA issued four interim rules as a result of the first confirmed case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle in the United States. **The 2nd interim rule simply stated “will also ban the use of poultry litter as a feed ingredient for ruminant animals.”**

Issuance of this interim rule has raised concerns in the Florida poultry industry concerning disposal of the poultry litter by-product and in the Florida cattle industry concerning the loss of a low-cost alternative feed source.

Facts About Poultry Litter

- Consists of bedding, fecal matter, feathers, and spilled poultry feed.
- Used as a cattle feed in areas where cattle and poultry production enterprises are in close proximity.
- Processed into cattle feed by deep stacking for 4 – 6 weeks.
- Deep stacking destroys potential viral, bacterial, and mold pathogens.
- Deep stacking processing modifies poultry litter to an acceptable feedstuff for cattle.

The Concern About Poultry Litter

- Ruminant meat and bone meal and ruminant blood products are allowable feed ingredients in poultry feed.
- Poultry litter as a feedstuff for ruminants may contain ruminant proteins that may or may not contain Specified Risk Materials (SRMs) that could transmit BSE to cattle.
- Verification and compliance with FDA animal feed rules includes inspection.
- Sampling of feed and feed ingredients utilizes feed microscopy and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) methods to determine content.

Current Status of the Final Rule Banning Poultry Litter

- Process actually began in November 2002 when FDA published an Advance Notice of Proposal Rulemaking (ANPR) seeking information and views on changes to current feed regulations.
- The ANPR specifically addressed the use of poultry litter as a feed for cattle and impact of banning the feeding of poultry litter to cattle.

¹ This document is AN150, one of a series of the Department of Animal Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), University of Florida. Published May 2004.

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- Currently FDA is evaluating whether feeding poultry litter to cattle constitutes sufficient threat to the safeguards to prevent the occurrence of BSE in the U. S.
- Additional consideration may be given to whether feeding of poultry litter may violate FDA rule 21 CFR 589.2000 that prohibits the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacturing of feed for ruminant animals.

Additional information concerning the banning of poultry litter as feedstuff for cattle will be forthcoming from the Florida Cooperative Extension Service/IFAS and Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services when more information and details of the Final Rule are available.

The Current Best Guess

- Poultry litter will be banned as a feedstuff for ruminants when the rule is released.
- Details concerning enforcement, compliance, and sanctions will logically follow publication of the rule.
- FDA estimates the time frame for publication of a Final Rule is 2 week to 2 months.
- An open comment period will follow publication of the Final Rule.
- Disposition of poultry litter as fertilizer source is undecided.

Implications of the Potential Feeding Ban

- Alternative for disposal of poultry litter will need to be addressed.
- Cost associated with disposal of poultry litter from poultry production enterprises will likely increase.
- Potential increases in regulation of poultry litter used as a fertilizer for agronomic crops and pasture may occur.
- Cattle producers will be forced to find alternative low-cost feedstuffs for winter supplementation of beef cattle.
- Overall production cost will increase for beef cattle enterprises that relied heavily on the use of poultry litter as a feed supplement.
- Other feedstuffs exist that can be utilized as a feed supplement for beef cattle. Additional information can be found at the following websites: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AN085>, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AN101>