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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IATP Calls on USDA to Protect U.S. Farmers, Consumers and Livestock from Mad Cow Disease

Minneapolis, Minnesota — The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy is calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure that U.S. farmers, consumers and livestock herds are fully protected from the possible spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, from the contaminated herd identified earlier today in Washington State.

"Given the total integration of the U.S. fast food and supermarket industries, largely the result of only a few companies controlling most of our food supply, we know that this long-anticipated announcement will be devastating to family farmers and ranchers all over the United States and possibly in Canada," stated Mark Ritchie, President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

"In this day of industrialized beef production and liberalized trade, it is disingenuous for US Agriculture Secretary Veneman to say this is about one isolated cow. There is too much at stake for our cattle farmers," said Ritchie. "With an incubation period of up to six years for this disease, it is imperative that the Bush Administration stop trying to hide this problem and start investigating who else might be at risk and taking action to prevent further threats to human lives."

"USDA needs to be tracing not only the history of today's admitted case, but all the herds it has been a part of or come into contact with," continued Ritchie. "The most likely method of transmission is through animal feed. If that's the case, we need to investigate and identify all animals that consumed that feed. This investigation may cover multiple farms and multiple countries."

If this mad cow case causes a plunge in beef and feed crop prices, IATP is calling upon the U.S. government to make money available to help the nearly one million beef producers and feed crop farmers in the U.S. The announcement could immediately impact the approximately 10 percent of U.S. beef that is exported overseas. Within hours of the announcement, Japan banned U.S. beef imports.

"This outbreak was inevitable since the US has failed to implement the basic precautionary rules completely banning the feeding of ground up animals to other animals as food," said Ritchie. "We need to follow the example of Great Britain where the government made the meat companies abandon these kinds of deadly practices."

IATP has set up a special web page to follow the U.S. mad cow case at: [www.agobservatory.org/madcow](http://www.agobservatory.org/madcow)

In November, IATP launched the Eat Well Guide, where consumers can connect with local beef producers who use sustainable practices, including grass-fed beef: [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org)

*The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy promotes resilient family farms, rural communities and ecosystems around the world through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy.*