



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0906

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As a Member of the House Agriculture Committee and a representative of many beef producers, I write to you with deep concern over the recent discovery of a suspected atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Brazil. Unfortunately, once the disease was discovered, Brazil failed to report it in a timely manner to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH). In fact, it took Brazil more than a month to submit their test sample to the WOAH lab in Canada.¹ While Brazil says that the symptoms reflect an atypical case, we are still awaiting the test results from WOAH to confirm this.²

I find it concerning that Brazil has repeatedly demonstrated their inability to report their atypical BSE cases in a timely manner. In their letter to you, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association states that Brazil has had cases of delayed reporting in 2021, 2019, 2014, and 2012.³

Brazil has already halted their beef exports to China,⁴ and I am concerned that Brazilian beef will be re-directed to the U.S. market where Brazilian beef imports have spiked in recent years.⁵

Given all this concerning information, I request answers to the following questions:

1. When did Brazil notify the Biden administration about the recent BSE case, and is it common practice for other trade partners to delay reporting of disease beyond the recommended 24-hour period?
2. Do you find Brazil's history of late reporting of animal diseases concerning?
3. What evidence has Brazil provided to USDA to justify 35 days between the beginning of the BSE episode and the confirmation of it?
4. Will the administration suspend Brazil beef imports until they consistently show that their safety standards and testing capabilities meet an equivalent level of safety as the United States?
5. What steps has USDA taken to ensure imports of beef from Brazil do not pose a risk to U.S. consumers and the U.S. cattle herd?

Thank you in advance for your answers to these questions. Please respond no later than March 31, 2022.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Miller
Member of Congress

1. [WAHIS \(woah.org\)](https://www.woah.org/)
2. [Brazil Suspends Beef Exports to China After Finding Mad-Cow Disease - WSJ](#)
3. [ncba-letter-to-usda-re-brazil-02272023.pdf](#)
4. [Brazil to halt beef exports to China after mad cow disease case | Reuters](#)
5. [USDA ERS - Chart Detail](#)