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**Contact: Jacki Rossi, (773) 525-4952 w, (219) 218-3824 c**  
**[jrossi@foodanimalconcerns.org](mailto:jrossi@foodanimalconcerns.org)**

### **FDA rule to safeguard against Mad Cow disease full of loopholes** FACT calls for ban on chicken litter as cattle feed

Chicago, IL – Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) is highly critical of the final mad cow feed rule published today by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) because it threatens public health by failing to prohibit the use of poultry litter as cattle feed. The rule increases restrictions on what can be included in animal feeds but still allows cattle to be fed unacceptable cattle protein, the principal way by which mad cow disease is spread.

Today's final rule is an expansion of the feed rule originally published in 1997 which first banned the practice of feeding cattle protein to cattle. The updated rule prohibits the use of certain cattle parts as feed for *all* animals, including: (1) the brains and spinal cords from cattle 30 months of age and older; and (2) the entire carcass of cattle 30 months of age or older that are not inspected and passed for human consumption and from which brains and spinal cords were not removed. In addition to failing to restrict poultry litter in feed it also allows cattle to be fed blood, blood products, and plate waste derived from cattle.

Responding to the new rule FACT's Executive Director, Richard Wood said, "While it removes some of the riskiest materials from all livestock feed, the new rule still allows cattle to be fed cattle meat and bone meal in the form of recycled poultry litter."

Poultry litter consists of manure, feathers, spilled chicken feed, wood shavings, corn husks, straw, and other materials that accumulate on the floors of the buildings where broiler chickens are raised. In 2004, the FDA acknowledged that feeding poultry litter to cattle could spread mad cow disease and proposed a ban on the practice which was never implemented due to industry pressure. In the final feed rule, the FDA discounted the risk from poultry litter based on a "back of the envelope" calculation by the rendering industry which ignored the potential for mad cow infectivity to pass through the avian gut and into manure.

The final feed rule intentionally allows 10 percent of infectivity to remain in feed. Enforcement of the rule depends on the ability of slaughter houses and rendering plants to exclude high risk cattle and to determine cattle age. There is the likelihood that these rules will not be followed as there is no regular inspection of these plants. Even with regular inspection, errors are common.

"A perfect example of such errors was clearly illustrated at the Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. earlier this year, leading to the largest U.S. meat recall on record," said Wood. "If this happens at plants where inspectors are present, what will happen in feed mills where there are no safeguards in place? The continued use of poultry litter as a cattle feed is a disaster waiting to happen."

Based in Chicago, Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) believes that healthy animals are essential for maintaining a safe food supply. FACT is committed to reducing the negative impact of animal farming on human health and has aggressively worked to address this issue since 1988. For more information please contact Richard Wood at (773) 525-4952 or visit [www.foodanimalconcerns.org](http://www.foodanimalconcerns.org).