Background

FDA in 1997 published a final rule prohibiting the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animal feeds given to ruminant animals, such as cows, sheep and goats. The regulation also requires process control systems to ensure that feed for ruminants does not contain the prohibited mammalian tissue.

In 2008, FDA published a regulation that strengthened the 1997 rule by prohibiting the tissues, such as brains and spinal cords from cattle 30 months of age and older, in animal feed.

Chickens cannot contract Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease, from ruminant meat and bone meal or any other ruminant byproduct feed; and not all chickens are fed a diet that consists of meat and bone meal or ruminant byproducts.

National Chicken Council Position Statement

“The Food and Drug Administration believes that the prohibitions in place, specifically, the added measure in the 2008 feed ban rule excluding high-risk materials from all animal feeds addresses risks associated with accidental feeding of such material to cattle.”

Additional Points:

- Chickens cannot contract BSE from ruminant byproducts, such as meat and bone meal derived from cattle.

- If used, the use of meat and bone meal in poultry diets is often restricted to less than 5 percent.

- Meat and bone meal is a high protein diet source. On average, meat and bone meal contains 50 percent crude protein as well as minerals such as calcium and phosphorus.

- As all other animal feed ingredients used in the United States, meat and bone meal is regulated by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO).