



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention (CDC)  
Atlanta GA 30333

JUL 20 1999

Mr. Andrew Kimbrell  
Executive Director  
International Center for Technology Assessment  
and  
Mr. Joseph Mendelson III  
Legal Advisor  
c/o Humane Farming Association  
Post Office Box 3577  
San Rafael, California 94912-8902

Dear Mr. Kimbrell and Mr. Mendelson:

This is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) response to the *Citizen Petition Seeking Immediate Action by the Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention To Combat The Spread Of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSEs) In the United States*. CDC conducts surveillance and epidemiologic studies of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), the major transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (prion disease) in humans; however, the Food and Drug Administration is the primary agency within the Department of Health and Human Services with jurisdiction over the regulatory issues raised in the petition. Hence, those regulatory aspects of the petition will not be addressed by CDC.

The petition expresses concern that CDC's current surveillance efforts, which indicate that approximately 1 case of CJD occurs per million population each year in the United States, greatly underestimate the true incidence of this disease. To the contrary, based on evidence from epidemiologic investigations both within and outside of the United States, CDC regards these national estimates of the incidence of CJD to be reasonably accurate. Nevertheless, CDC has supported and will continue to support prion disease-related epidemiologic studies, monitoring programs, and State health department reporting. In many respects, such actions have been or will be similar to the actions requested in the petition. Based on available fiscal and technical resources, CDC's current approach is the most effective means for

