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## Ag dept. to require more tests before confirming disease

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is setting more stringent standards for when it will announce that an initial screening test for mad cow disease has yielded a suspicious result, the Agriculture Department said Wednesday.

The department is now requiring additional preliminary test results before the public is informed. A leader of the beef industry hailed the new procedure, while a consumer advocate expressed skepticism.

The change comes after two cases in which the department announced that screening tests could not rule out that animals had the fatal brain-wasting disease. More exacting tests later showed the cattle were free of mad cow.

The new system, which took effect Wednesday, uses the screening tests as they were designed to be used — with analysis of three samples of

tissue, said Jim Rogers, a spokesman for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

A carcass is considered suspicious if an initial sample indicates the possible presence of the misshapen protein blamed for mad cow, also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE.

Under the new procedure, the results of two more samples would then be examined, Rogers said. If either additional sample yielded inconclusive results, the findings would be announced publicly and definitive tests would be conducted at the department's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

Under the screening system the department had used since June, the public was informed when the initial sample yielded inconclusive results, even if the next two tests were both negative.

## Foundation

Continued from page 1

hydraulic fracturing.”

Holditch said the Lucas Gold Medal is the top award given to petroleum engineers.

“We have to keep our focus on achieving multiple outcomes simultaneously,” Holditch said of the petroleum engineering department. “Our faculty needs to be really good at both teaching and research.”

Holditch, who has worked for companies such as Shell Oil Company and Schlumberger, has done his recent research while also serving as department head.

“Our department has always been ranked as the best petroleum engineering department, and we plan to improve upon our past success,” Holditch

said. “We are focusing our research efforts in the department to develop an ‘industry directed’ research effort. This means that our faculty and graduate students are developing solutions for the problems that are of most interest to the oil and gas industry.”

Darla-Jean Weatherford, communications specialist for the petroleum engineering department, said receiving an award from the SPE is special, but receiving one from AIME also, as Holditch will, is prestigious.

Sue Kindred, board liaison of SPE and awards program manager, said the award will be given to Holditch at the Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition in Dallas in October 2005.

Holditch, who earned three degrees at A&M, said “I think

receiving the award is an honor for me and for Texas A&M University. Much of the work that I have done over the years has been in cooperation with graduate students and faculty members at Texas A&M University.”

Gerardo Jimenez, a senior petroleum engineering major, said he believes that Holditch receiving this award can be an encouragement to current Aggies in their pursuit of success.

“Dr. Holditch’s achievements in industry research and his long career as a student at A&M can help motivate us in the petroleum engineering department because he has been a solid professional role model,” Jimenez said. “He is most deserving of this award, and it is a privilege to be his student.”

## Fire

Continued from page 1

northwest of Abilene.

Everyone escaped except Colton Blain Dentler, 6, and his sister Ryann, who was rescued by Russell Dentler and revived by Amy Dentler, Patsy Teague told the Reporter-News at the time. But the family was unable to find Colton, Teague has said, adding that the home burned in seven minutes.

The five surviving children are “being

taken care of,” Moore said, declining to comment further.

The grand jury returned 28 indictments, seven on each person. Each has been charged with one count of capital murder, one count of second-degree attempted murder, one count of third-degree possession and transport of anhydrous ammonia, and four counts of child endangerment, a state-jail felony, Moore said.

Anhydrous ammonia is used in making methamphetamine.

The four were jailed in Jones County, each in lieu of \$177,500 bond.

## Oil

Continued from page 1

The main reason for soaring prices nowadays is that global demand has risen faster than producers had expected, leaving the market with very little cushion in the event of an unexpected supply problem, terror-related or otherwise.

PFC Energy, a Washington-based consulting firm, estimates that total global production will average 82.1 million barrels a day in 2004, or just 100,000 barrels a day above consumption.

“OPEC is putting out a lot of oil, but the market is absorbing it,” said Jamal Qureshi, an oil market analyst at PFC Energy.

On Tuesday, U.S. light crude for September delivery to a closing price of \$44.15 — an all-time high on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Oil prices also hit new heights in London on Tuesday, closing at \$40.64 on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Recent geopolitical uncertainty in countries such as Russia and Iraq has made energy traders edgy, raising

fears that the supply-demand balance could tilt further in the wrong direction.

In Russia, the concern is over the fate of troubled oil giant Yukos, which produces 2 percent of the world’s oil but is under pressure from the government to come up with billions of dollars in back taxes. Fears of an immediate drop in output abated Wednesday, sending global oil prices lower, after Yukos said Russian authorities will allow the company to use its bank accounts to “continue financing production activities.”

## Graduates

Continued from page 1

Laughlin is a 1964 graduate and his son, Brad, scheduled among the degree candidates to receive a bachelor’s political science.

A&M Student Body President Jack Hildebrand said Laughlin has a special connection with graduates.

“He understands the experiences the students have been through while attending A&M,” Hildebrand said. “He should have a special comfort while addressing a group of fellow Aggies and I hope he will be glad to be back on campus for a short while.”

Political science graduate and assistant lecturer James Cottrill Armitage and Laughlin have more involved in law and are aware of what government does.

“These two can really put a lot of what students have studied in political science classes,” Cottrill said. “They are people who have played very important roles in our nation’s political process.”

Hildebrand said it is inspiring to listen to speakers who have experiences that students can imagine having.

“For the students that are here, hope there is importance given to the power we have as Americans to influence our society,” Hildebrand said. “These two men have dedicated much of their lives to public service, and we need strong leaders to make this commitment as well.”

## Expedition

Continued from page 1

the Institute of Nautical Archaeology every year, Donny Hamilton, president of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology.

The Institute of Nautical Archaeology is a private nonprofit entity, not part of the A&M System; however, the two work closely together with A&M providing facilities and the INA providing research, Hamilton said.

“The INA is the most respected of all entities that conducts nautical archaeology, we do more research than anyone else in the field,” Hamilton said, “really this is the center of the world of nautical archaeology.”

As an additional benefit to the A&M campus, all the excavations at the Institute, including Wachau, teach in the anthropology department at A&M.

Junior biology major and biology enthusiast Faegen Lee is excited about the implications of the Institute’s research.

“I think the INA is a great organization in that it allows us to understand ourselves by looking at things from another perspective,” Lee said.

The Aegean expedition will renew its study next year. For 2005 the team plans to widen its search to include sites from a Persian invasion of Greece in 480 B.C.

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