



## Washington State Department of Agriculture

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### **Suspected case of bovine tuberculosis discovered in dairy cow**

**OLYMPIA** – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) is investigating a case of possible bovine tuberculosis in a dairy cow following test results provided to the agency on Wednesday. The cow had been sent to a Cowlitz County facility for slaughter, but the meat was held after a food safety inspector identified a problem and submitted samples for testing.

State health officials say there's no immediate human health concern connected to the suspected bovine TB case. The meat from the infected cow was isolated until the test results came back. It will not enter food channels, and has been destroyed. Pasteurization kills bacteria, including bovine TB; the state [Department of Health](#) recommends against drinking raw milk because of potential health risks. The investigation is ongoing.

"The good news is that the safety systems in place were effective in identifying this problem and preventing it from spreading," WSDA Director Dan Newhouse said. "Now, our inspectors will work with our federal, state and agricultural partners to trace this to its source and determine whether any other cows were infected."

WSDA's preliminary investigation indicates the cow was culled from a Grant County dairy herd and transported for slaughter on Jan. 8. There, an inspector with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service noticed a suspicious lesion and sent a sample to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Iowa. On Jan. 16, the lab reported that the sample was consistent with bovine TB.

[Bovine TB](#) is contagious among cattle and can cause severe coughing, fatigue and emaciation. The WSDA has issued an order preventing the dairy from moving any of its cows and directing that all milk produced there be pasteurized. Meanwhile, inspectors with the WSDA Food Safety and Animal Services divisions are working with USDA investigators on tracing the disease.

A bovine TB eradication campaign by animal health officials and the livestock industry has all but eliminated the disease from the U.S. since the program began in 1917, except for sporadic occurrences. Washington cattle have been TB-free since 1988, thanks in large part to a robust state and federal program for detecting the disease, and the continued cooperation of the dairy and cattle industry.

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