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July 20, 2004

Division of Dockets Management  
(HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF COMMENT PERIOD

Docket No. 2004N-0264

Baker Commodities Inc. respectfully submits this request that the Commissioner of Food and Drugs extend the comment period in the above matter for an additional 60 days.

A. Decision involved

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced that it will publish an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) on possible changes to its feed regulation (21 C.F.R. § 589.2000) and other additional measures being considered to mitigate the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). 69 Fed. Reg. 42288 (July 14, 2004).

B. Action requested

Baker Commodities Inc., Kerman Division, requests that FDA extend the comment period on this ANPRM from 30 days to 90 days.

We request that FDA give expedited consideration to this Request for Extension of Comment Period.

Baker Commodities Inc., Kerman Division urges FDA not to publish a proposed rule banning SRMs from animal feed until the agency has reviewed and considered the comments on this ANPRM relevant to an SRM ban.

C. Statement of grounds

The changes being considered to FDA's feed rule are extremely complex and if enacted will have a severely detrimental financial impact on our company and industry as well as limit our ability to provide continued employment to those who have worked so hard to provide the necessary services and products that our customers have come to expect. The Kerman Division produces large quantities of meat and bone meal each month. This material comes, to a great extent, from dairy farms in Central California. If

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we declined to pick up the dairy dead stock each of these dairies would, in a matter of days, accumulate a large number of dead and decaying animals. These animals, left unprocessed, would present a tremendous health hazard. The FDA's requirement of 30 days to comment does not provide dairymen or those of us in the rendering industry sufficient time to research other possible methods of disposal of SRM containing material. FDA states that it needs to receive comments as soon as possible so that it can publish a proposed rule to ban SRMs in all animal feed. This is a serious matter that will require significant time and resources to properly comment on the 25 questions pertaining to the feed rule that potentially will change our industry and other related industries. Baker Commodities Inc. Kerman Division believes that such a short comment period is insufficient to provide for an adequate response to questions with such complexity that will have such far-reaching impacts on our industry and the industries we serve. It is our position that in order to properly respond to these questions, it is imperative that additional time be allowed for Baker Commodities Inc. Kerman Division to submit comments and accurate data for FDA's review.

For these reasons Baker Commodities Inc. Kerman Division urges FDA to allow a 90-day comment period for the ANPRM.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Baker Commodities Inc. Kerman Division

*Manuel Ponte*

Manuel Ponte  
Division Manager

Date	# of pages	
To: DOCKETS MGMT	From: MANUEL PONTE	
Co./Dept. FED GOVT	Co. BAKER COMMODITIES	
Phone #	Phone # (559) 846-7675	
Fax # 501 827 6870	Fax #	