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A JAPANESE FARM WITH MORE THAN 400 HEAD OF CATTLE REPORTEDLY HAS 45 head suspected of being infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The Japanese government requires destroying and testing all cattle raised in close contact during their first year with an animal that tests positive for BSE. According to news reports, Japan's 22nd confirmed case of BSE earlier this year was a cow from this operation and resulted in discovery of the additional 45 suspected BSE-infected cattle.

THE "USE IT OR LOSE IT" PROVISIONS OF WESTERN WATER LAW "DISCOURAGE conservation and make the reallocation of water to in-stream environmental uses more difficult," according to a report released Thursday by the U.S. Geological Survey. (Greenwire, Feb. 9) *The report says the solution is for water managers at the local, state and federal level to rely on science, including taking regular inventories of available water and use patterns. In addition, water managers need to come up with a reliable method of estimating minimum water requirements for endangered species, hydrologic function and tribal use, according to the report. The agency highlights four regions at risk of running out of water: the Middle Rio Grande Basin, the greater Los Angeles area, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area in Arizona and Upper Klamath Lake in Oregon. The report is available at <<http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/2005/circ1261/pdf/C1261.pdf>>.*

IN AN EDITORIAL WEDNESDAY, THE VANCOUVER COLUMBIAN URGES THE STATE House of Representatives to follow the lead of the state Senate in supporting a "thorough study of Washington's highest-in-the-nation minimum wage." The Senate this week voted 43-1 to have the state Employment Security Department study the impact the minimum wage has on job creation, unemployment, purchasing power of low-income workers, and general economic activity. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy would conduct the study in concert with ESD. The Columbian said it believes the minimum wage "needs some reigning in." While "plenty, and perhaps most" of those workers earning minimum wage, deserve the \$7.63 an hour they now receive, "there may be newcomers to the working world" for whom the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour "might be more in line with their skills and productivity."

THE HEAD OF AUSTRALIA'S MONOPOLY WHEAT EXPORTER, AWB LTD., RESIGNED Thursday amid reports that the company paid hundreds of millions of dollars in kickbacks to Saddam Hussein under the United Nation's oil-for-food program. (AP/Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Feb. 8) A government inquiry found that AWB paid as much as \$222 million in bogus transport fees to a Jordanian trucking company that was partially owned by the Iraqi government under the deposed dictator.

THE U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION HAS RULED THAT BRAZILIAN orange juice exporters have been dumping juice into the U.S. market at volumes and prices that are unfair to the U.S. citrus industry. Antidumping duty deposits on imports will remain in place while the Department of Commerce reviews each Brazilian exporter's actions, which could take two years. Jay Clark, interim executive vice-president and CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual, said the ruling confirmed what growers and processors have suspected. He said major harm has occurred to growers

trying to recover from hurricanes, canker and other production problems. "We are gratified that the ITC and Commerce Department agreed with our arguments, and have given us a new opportunity to compete fairly with the giant Brazilian industry," Clark said.

* 2006 Washington Farm Bureau. Washington Farm Bureau NewsWatch is a periodic update on news of interest to agriculture. Contact Dean Boyer, director of public relations, 1-800-331-3276 or, send e-mail to dboyer@wsfb.com to receive NewsWatch by fax or e-mail.