

News Article

Groceries hold off on selling cow heads for Hispanic holiday fare 10:46 AM MST on Friday, January 2, 2004 Associated Press SUNNYSIDE, Wash. —

Demand for cow heads, a popular Hispanic holiday fare, likely won't be slowed by a federal ban on selling heads and other parts of cows older than 30 months, a health expert says. The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Tuesday announced a ban on selling skulls, brains, vertebrae and eyes of cattle older than 30 months, following the discovery of mad cow disease in a dairy cow. The origin of the 6 ½-year-old cow has been traced to Canada. The ban probably won't prevent consumers from buying exotic cow parts for specialty ethnic dishes, but consuming them could pose a slightly higher risk. The skinless heads, which have the brains intact, are traditionally wrapped in burlap bags, seasoned with onions, garlic and cilantro and roasted or steamed for hours, to make the Mexican specialty barbacoa.

Tripas is made from intestinal material and could contain part of the ileum, which is the terminal portion of the small intestine. As you may recall from the recent wealth of BSE information, the small intestine contains neurological tissue. So both of these dishes are a cause for concern.

See Food Safety links (USDA) for additional information on BSE. (Mad Cow Disease)