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**BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY STATUS REPORT
prepared by the OIE Central Bureau**

The United Kingdom Minister of Health announced on 20 March 1996 that an independent advisory Committee had advised the Government that 10 cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), a human disease with effects similar to those of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, have been identified with a previously unrecognised and consistent disease pattern. Although there was no scientific proof that BSE can be transmitted to humans by beef, the Committee concluded that the most likely explanation to date was that these cases were linked to exposure to BSE before the introduction of the 1989 ban in the United Kingdom on using certain bovine tissues for human food. The Committee recommended that certain additional preventive measures be taken, including the deboning of carcasses from cattle aged over 30 months in specially licensed plants. The United Kingdom Government accepted the recommendations, which will be put into effect as soon as possible.

The announcement has caused considerable worldwide publicity and concern, and repercussions in Europe regarding beef consumption and trade.

The following is a brief summary of international reporting and activities regarding BSE.

OIE Member Countries including the United Kingdom and affected countries with a low incidence of BSE continue, through the OIE, to provide Veterinary Services and International Organisations with information about disease occurrence (see table on page 34), methods they use for control, research on the disease and information about its possible relation to similar diseases in other species including humans.

The OIE convened BSE experts twice in 1990 and once in 1991. The purpose of these meetings was to inform the world's Veterinary Services on what was known about this recently emerging disease and to formulate recommended importation procedures for animals and animal products, including semen and embryos. These procedures were adopted by the OIE International Committee in May 1992 and incorporated into the periodically revised OIE *International Animal Health Code*, the agreed text for the purpose.

In 1994, the OIE reconvened an expert group in order to determine if there was any new epidemiological or research information on BSE which would lead to considering revision of the chapter on the disease in the *International Animal Health Code*. Twenty-five specialists and observers from nine countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Commission, including experts on CJD, participated in the meeting.

NUMBER OF REPORTED CASES OF BSE WORLDWIDE

COUNTRY	1987 and before	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995^(a)	1996^(a)
France	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	4	3	3
Ireland (Rep. of)	0	0	15	14	17	18	16	19	16	...
Portugal	0	0	0	1 ^(b)	1 ^(b)	1 ^(b)	3 ^(b)	12	14	2
Switzerland	0	0	0	2	8	15	29	64	68	18
United Kingdom (U.K.)										
Great Britain	132	1,910	6,863	12,829	22,613	34,712	36,271	25,578	14,713	...
Northern Ireland	0	3	30	100	170	333	487	363	156	...
Jersey	0	1	4	8	14	23	37	22
Guernsey	4	34	52	83	75	92	115	69
Isle of Man	0	6	6	22	67	109	110	55
Total U.K.	136	1,954	6,955	13,042	22,939	35,269	37,020	26,087

Note: Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Jersey: figures by date of confirmation; Guernsey: figures by date of slaughter; Isle of Man: figures by date of service of restriction notice on suspected case.

(a) Data for Northern Ireland: as of 4 December 1995
 Data for France: as of 27 March 1996
 Data for Portugal: as of 24 January 1996
 Data for Switzerland: as of 8 March 1996
 Data for Great Britain: as of 1 December 1995 (estimate based on data provided by the United Kingdom to the United States of America)

(b) Imported cases

... no information available

**In addition, the following countries have reported cases only in imported animals
(date of initial detection)**

Germany: 4 cases (02/92, 02/94, 04/94, 05/94)
 Canada: 1 case (11/93)
 Denmark: 1 case (07/92)

Falkland Islands: 1 case (1989)
 Italy: 2 cases (10/94)
 Oman: 2 cases confirmed in 1989

The group recognised that the United Kingdom was the only country with a high incidence of BSE. They expressed satisfaction that as an apparent result of a 1988 ban on the feeding of ruminant origin feed to ruminants, the rate of infection had continued to decline in the United Kingdom. They were of the opinion at the time that similar measures taken by other countries where cases had been diagnosed were appropriate for the prevention of spread and/or for the eventual eradication of the disease.

Experimental transmission of BSE and similar diseases between species had been achieved. At the time there was no clear evidence that natural transmission of BSE to cattle other than by infected feed occurred. Research on alternate infection routes continued but because of a very long incubation period results were still pending.

From the beginning of the BSE outbreaks in Europe, the theoretical risk of BSE transmission to humans had not been discounted and had been considered in all national control programmes for the disease. Research continued with this possibility in mind. Epidemiological studies on BSE compared with CJD in humans at the time showed no relationship. The policy of all the infected countries to minimise the risk of contamination of human food and pharmaceuticals was the only acceptable measure which could then be taken. In light of new information on BSE the group in 1994 recommended amendment of the *International Animal Health Code*, which was approved by the International Committee in May 1995.

The WHO has also been active in this field, in close cooperation with, and with the participation of, the OIE. The WHO held consultations in 1991 and 1993 to examine, and advise countries on, existing knowledge about the use of animal tissues as animal feed and human food, and in the preparation of medicinal and other products for human and animal use.

In May 1995, the WHO again held a consultation on public health issues related to human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. Some apparent dietary CJD links noted in a United Kingdom analysis were considered to be due to recall bias, and not to indicate a causal association. The consultation concluded at the time that available data suggested that all mammals including humans should be regarded as potentially susceptible to BSE if sufficiently exposed, that current control policies were considered adequate to minimise the risk of exposure to animals and man, and that epidemiological data in Europe did not indicate a change in the incidence of CJD in humans that could be attributed to BSE.

In an effort to assist unaffected countries at possible risk, the OIE, in February 1996, sponsored a training course on the diagnosis of BSE for 14 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic countries, held in Vladimir, Russia.

The international activities which have been conducted by the European Union are not included in this summary.

As can be seen in the attached update of the number of BSE cases worldwide reported to the OIE, the incidence of the disease in the United Kingdom continued to decline in 1995.

Considering the recent findings in the United Kingdom, both the OIE and WHO are proposing new expert meetings related to their responsibilities with the disease.

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BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY IN FRANCE

Translation of two faxes received on 22 and 27 March 1996 from Dr B. Vallat, Head of the Department of Food Quality and Animal and Plant Health Actions, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Paris:

S. R. - 1

Number of cases since the beginning of 1996: three (3).

Date of initial detection of animal health incident:

- case 1/96: 12 January 1996
- case 2/96: 26 December 1995
- case 3/96: 20 December 1995

Geographical identification of the outbreaks: Brittany region:

- 1/96. Guisseny district, Lannilis canton, Finistère department
- 2/96. Pommerit-le-Vicomte district, Lanvollon canton, Côtes-d'Armor department
- 3/96. Plourac'h district, Callac canton, Côtes-d'Armor department.

Details concerning the outbreaks:

No.	Species	No. of animals in the outbreak	No. of cases	No. of deaths	No. of animals destroyed	No. of animals slaughtered
1/96	bov	80	1	0	80	0
2/96	bov	151	1	0	151	0
3/96	bov	125	1	0	125	0

Comments concerning affected population: dairy herds.

- case No. 1/96: a Prim'Holstein cow, born on 22 February 1989 (i.e. 17 months before the ministerial order of 24 July 1990 banning the use of meat and bone meal in bovine rations);
- case No. 2/96: a Normandy cow, born in 1989 (i.e. 1 year before the aforementioned ministerial order);
- case No. 3/96: a Prim'Holstein cow, born on 12 February 1987 (therefore 3½ years before the aforementioned ministerial order).

Comments concerning diagnosis: histopathological confirmation on 24 January 1996 (cases Nos. 2/96 and 3/96) and 7 February 1996 (case No. 1/96).

Control measures taken to date: slaughter of the entire herds; destruction of the carcasses at a rendering plant, with incineration of the meat and bone meal thus obtained.

- outbreak No. 1/96: entire herd slaughtered on 11 March 1996;
- outbreak No. 2/96: entire herd slaughtered on 25 March 1996;
- outbreak No. 3/96: entire herd is due to be slaughtered on 1 April 1996.

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FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN AZERBAIJAN
End of the outbreaks

Translation of a fax received on 25 March 1996 from Dr M. Gousejnov, Director of Veterinary Services, State Veterinary Committee, Baku:

S. R. - 2 No. 1

Final date of previous report period: 12 February 1996 (see *Disease Information*, **9** [6], 18).

Final date of this report period: 24 March 1996.

The foot and mouth disease outbreaks reported in Agdzhabedin district were eliminated on 11 March 1996 thanks to the measures applied. In consequence, the Republic of Azerbaijan may be considered free from foot and mouth disease of cattle and sheep with effect from 11 March 1996.

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CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER IN MOLDAVIA
Additional information

Text of a fax received on 26 March 1996 from Dr V. Bahau, Chief of the Veterinary Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Kishinev:

S. R. - 2 No. 1

Final date of previous report period: 21 March 1996 (see *Disease Information*, **9** [11], 31).

Final date of this report period: 21 March 1996.

Estimated date of first infection: 12 March 1996.

Number of separate outbreaks identified so far: one (1).

Geographical identification of the outbreak: Korzheuts village, Brichany district (in the northern part of the country).

Comments concerning affected population: fattening pigs in five private farms.

Comments to date concerning epidemiology of the disease: the pigs in these farms were probably in indirect contact with wild boar. Investigations are continuing.

Control measures taken during report period: quarantine, sanitary measures, vaccination in the affected village and in Brichany district.

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CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER IN CROATIA

Text of a fax received on 26 March 1996 from Prof. M. Tadic, Head of the Veterinary Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Zagreb:

S. R. - 1

Nature of diagnosis: clinical, post-mortem and laboratory.

Date of initial detection of animal health incident: 15 February 1996.

Estimated date of first infection: 9 February 1996.

Number of separate outbreaks identified so far: six (6).

Geographical identification of the outbreaks:

- 1/96. Ivanic Grad district, Sisak department
- 2/96. Klostar Ivanic district, Sisak department
- 3/96. Popovaca district, Sisak department
- 4/96. Ivanic Grad district, Sisak department
- 5/96. Klostar Ivanic district, Sisak department
- 6/96. Cazma district, Bjelovar department.

Details concerning the outbreaks:

No.	Species	No. of animals in the outbreak	No. of cases	No. of deaths	No. of animals destroyed	No. of animals slaughtered
1/96	sui	11	2	5	6	0
2/96	sui	66	9	12	54	0
3/96	sui	6	1	3	3	0
4/96	sui	10	...	3	7	0
5/96	sui	12	...	2	10	0
6/96	sui	169	...	12	157	0

Comments concerning affected population: breeding and fattening pigs in small family-run farms.

Comments concerning diagnosis: immunofluorescence and ELISA tests carried out at the Veterinary Institute of the Republic of Croatia.

Comments to date concerning epidemiology of the disease: investigations are under way.

Control measures taken to date: stamping out, vaccination in the surrounding area, surveillance zone and standstill established within a 10-km radius around the outbreak; all other necessary veterinary-sanitary measures have been taken.

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CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER IN AUSTRIA
Wildlife

Text of a fax received on 28 March 1996 from Dr P. Weber, Chief Veterinary Officer, Ministry of Health, Sports and Consumer Protection, Vienna:

S. R. - 2 No. 1

Final date of previous report period: 4 January 1996 (see *Disease Information*, **9** [1], 1).

Final date of this report period: 22 March 1996.

Number of separate outbreaks identified since the beginning of 1996: one (1).

Geographical identification of the new outbreak:

1/96. Ringelsdorf municipality, Gänserndorf district, Lower Austria province. The area is on the border with Slovakia and is in close proximity to outbreak No. 2/95 (see *Disease Information*, **8** [46], 154).

Comments concerning affected population: occurrence of the disease only in wild boar. One animal was found dead.

Comments concerning diagnosis: immunofluorescence test and virus isolation were carried out at the Federal Institute for the Control of Animal Virus Disease, Vienna.

Comments to date concerning epidemiology of the disease: origin unknown; investigations under way.

Control measures taken during report period: the adopted measures are in accordance with Directive 80/217/EEC. Enforced hunting of wild boars. All necessary sanitary measures have been taken.

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