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### Livestock and Products

## EFSA publishes new report on the Geographical BSE Risk Assessment

### 2004

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**Report Highlights:**

In August 2004 the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) published new scientific reports on the GBR classifications for seven countries. The U.S. was classified in level three which means "BSE is likely but not confirmed or confirmed at a lower level".

The risk assessment was based on information submitted by the countries concerned, and relates in particular to imports of bovines and meat and bone meal from the UK and other BSE-risk countries.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Brussels USEU [BE2]  
[E3]

On August 20, 2004 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published up-to-date scientific reports on the Geographical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Risk (GBR) for seven countries. The countries are Australia, Canada, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and the United States.

The GBR evaluations are based on information submitted by the countries concerned in response to a European Commission recommendation in 1998, which set out the information requirements for such an assessment. The scientific reports address the GBR in a number of countries based on data covering the period 1980-2003.

The information concerns in particular imports of bovines and meat and bone meal (MBM) from the United Kingdom and other BSE-risk countries, rendering standards for animal by-products, use specific risk materials (SRM's), and feeding of meat and bone meal (MBM) to ruminants.

**Table of the classification of the countries**

GBR level	Presence of one or more cattle clinically or pre-clinically infected with the BSE agent in a geographical region/country	GBR of the country/Region	
		Status Before	Status After
I	Highly unlikely	Australia (I) Norway (I)	Australia (I)
II	Unlikely but not excluded	Sweden (II) Canada (II) USA (II)	Sweden (II) Norway (II)
III	Likely but not confirmed or confirmed at a lower level	South Africa (N/A) Mexico (N/A),	Canada (III) USA (III) South Africa (III) Mexico (III)
IV	Confirmed at a higher level		

The result of the report is that Australia and Sweden were kept at the same level as before the update, while Norway, Canada and the U.S. were classed at a higher level.

The EFSA concludes that the BSE agent that was found in the U.S. was probably imported into the U.S. and could have reached domestic cattle in the middle of the 1980s. Cattle imported in the mid-1980s could have been rendered in the late 1980s and therefore led to an internal challenge in the early 1990s. EFSA concludes that it is possible that MBM's imported into the U.S. reached domestic cattle and posed a risk in the early 1990s.

According to the EFSA, a processing risk developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s when cattle imports from BSE-risk countries were slaughtered or died, and were processed (partly) into feed, together with some imports of MBM. This risk continued to exist, and grew significantly in the mid-1990s when domestic cattle, infected by imported MBM, reached processing. Given the low stability of the system, the risk increased over the years with continued imports of cattle and MBM from BSE risk countries.

This assessment deviates from the previous assessment (Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) opinion, 2000) because at that time several exporting countries were not considered a potential risk.

It is also worth noting that the current GBR conclusions are not dependent on the large exchange of imports between the U.S. and Canada. The threat from European exports to the U.S. varied from moderate to high. These challenges indicate that it was likely that BSE infectivity was introduced into the North American continent.

EFSA and its Scientific Expert Working group on GBR are concerned that the inspection missions of the Food and Veterinary office (FVO – DG SANCO) conducted in member states and third countries didn't assess the available information in light of the risk posed by BSE. They recommend including BSE-related aspects in future inspection missions.

### **Expected development of the GBR**

As long as there are no significant changes in rendering or feeding, the stability remains very to extremely unstable. Thus, the probability of cattle to be (pre-clinically or clinically) infected with the BSE-agent persistently increases.

### **Canada**

For Canada the EFSA evaluation concludes that the BSE agent was probably imported to the country in the 1980s and could have been rendered in the late 1980s and therefore posed a risk in the early 1990s. A certain risk that BSE-infected cattle entered processing in Canada, and were at least partly rendered for feed, occurred in the early 1990s when cattle imported from the UK in the mid-1980s could have been slaughtered. This risk grew significantly in the mid-1990s when domestic cattle, infected by imported MBM, reached processing. This risk increased over the years with continued imports of cattle and MBM from BSE risk countries.

### **Australia**

The EFSA concludes that in the case of Australia, an extremely or very unstable system was exposed to a very low or negligible challenge through the import of cattle. Given the negligible level of external challenge through MBM it is highly unlikely that any internal risk occurred.

This report is drafted from the EFSA scientific report. The full report can be found at: [www.efsa.eu.int](http://www.efsa.eu.int)

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E24044	European Commissioner David Byrn's first regular BSE report of the year	04/04/04
E24006	BSE – Potential Concerns of the European Commission	01/09/04

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