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Germany

Livestock and Products

BSE in Germany - Update Covering 2005

2006

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Report Highlights:

In 2005, 32 cases of BSE were confirmed in Germany, compared to 65 in 2004. Only one additional case has been confirmed in 2006. This brings the total number of BSE cases to 390, since it was first detected in Germany in November 2000.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Berlin [GM1]
[GM]

In 2005, 32 cases of BSE were confirmed in Germany, compared to 65 in 2004. The German Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food, and Agriculture (BMELV) views this as a clear sign that the measures taken to combat BSE are effective.

As of December 31, 2005, the total number of confirmed BSE cases in Germany amounted to 389 cases. Of the total, 7 cases were detected in 2000, 125 cases in 2001, 106 cases in 2002, 54 cases in 2003, 65 cases in 2004, and 32 cases in 2005. From January 1 through 23, 2006, one additional case was confirmed in Baden-Wuerttemberg. The geographical distribution of the confirmed cases is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of confirmed BSE cases in Germany, as of December 31, 2005.

State	Number of confirmed BSE cases							Number of cattle in that state*	Total cases per 1 million head
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total		
Bavaria	5	59	27	21	21	7	141	3,824,100	37
Lower-Saxony	1	17	27	7	14	2	68	2,652,800	26
Baden-Wuerttemberg	-	12	11	9	6	6	44	1,162,100	38
Schleswig-Holstein	1	12	14	1	1	3	32	1,241,500	26
North Rhine-Westphalia	-	2	2	4	8	4	20	1,401,000	14
Brandenburg	-	3	4	3	3	3	16	613,000	26
Saxony	-	4	4	3	2	2	15	522,200	29
Rhineland-Palatinate	-	4	6	-	2	1	13	427,500	30
Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	-	2	4	-	3	2	11	563,100	20
Hesse	-	3	2	2	2	2	11	497,600	22
Saxony-Anhalt	-	4	4	1	1	-	10	373,100	27
Thuringia	-	2	1	3	2	-	8	374,200	21
Saarland	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	59,100	17
Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	20,600	0
Total	7	125	106	54	65	32	389	13,731,900	28

* Based on an animal census November 2002

(Source: German Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection, BMELV)

BSE tests

In 2005, a total of 2,073,636 animals were tested for BSE in Germany, of which 32 BSE cases were confirmed. Of the total, 16 cases were discovered through routine testing at slaughter and an additional 16 were detected through mandatory testing of deceased animals.

Since January 25, 2001, BSE tests at slaughter became mandatory in Germany for all cattle above the age of 24 months. However, some retail chains require the testing of all cattle, irrespective of age. Testing below the age of 24 months is purely for marketing reasons. It does not add any additional value in terms of BSE measures, because tests on younger

animals are not very reliable. Between 2001 – 2004, 60 to 70 percent of all cattle and calves slaughtered in Germany were tested for BSE.

The EU requires BSE testing for all risk animals¹ above 24 months of age, while routine testing of healthy appearing animals is only required for cattle older than 30 months. There is an ongoing discussion in Germany to move the testing age from 24 to 30 months, thus bringing it in line with EU requirements. Proponents argue that the testing process should be changed because there has only been one confirmed case of BSE, since 2000, among animals younger than 30 months at slaughter. This case was detected in January 2001 and occurred in an animal that was born before the December 2000 ban on meat and bone meal (MBM) in animal feed went into effect. Currently, the transmission through MBM is the most widely accepted theory for contracting BSE. Theoretically, from June 2003 onwards, all animals slaughtered at 30 months or younger should not have had contact with feed containing MBM. Therefore, proponents feel that it is safe to raise the mandatory testing age to 30 months. Another reason for changing the German requirements is the current threat of avian influenza (AI). In the light of the recent AI outbreaks in Russia, Romania, and Turkey, it is argued that resources should be allocated to AI prevention rather than BSE tests for younger animals.

The German Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection (BMELV), the German State Departments of Agriculture, and veterinary experts of the respective research institutes will discuss this issue in early February.

Table 2: BSE tests and results from January through December 2005

January - December 2005	Number of tests	Number of confirmed BSE cases	Percent cases per tests in that category*	Percent cases of all confirmed cases**
Animal Category				
Deceased animals	222,283	16	0.007	50
Other risk animals	8,658	0	0.000	0
Animals showing clinical BSE symptoms	39	0	0.000	0
Animals appearing healthy at slaughter	1,839,573	16	0.001	50
Animals slaughtered as part of a BSE eradication measure	1,017	0	0.000	0
Suspicious animals to be confirmed by a lab	2,066	0	0.000	0
Total	2,073,636	32	0.002	100

* calculated as "number of confirmed cases" divided by "number of tests" in that category multiplied by 100

** calculated as "number of confirmed cases" in a category divided by "total number of confirmed cases" multiplied by 100

Source: German Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection

¹ Risk animals, include deceased animals, animals that died on transport, downers (i.e. non-ambulatory animals), animals that show any kind of disease symptoms, animals that show clinical BSE symptoms, or were part of destroyed herds or cohorts of a previously confirmed BSE case (birth cohort = animals born on the same farm within 12 months before or after the birth; feeding cohort = animals that were raised together with animal with confirmed BSE within the first 12 months of life of the latter, all offspring).

Risk Management by the German Government

For a detailed outline of the German risk management system please refer to report GM1033.

Production

In CY 2004², Germany produced 1.263 million MT of beef. 292,000 MT of beef were imported, 81,000 MT from outside the EU-25 (mainly Argentina and Brazil), 21,000 MT from new EU-member states (mainly Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania), and the remaining 190,000 MT from other EU-15 countries. Exports amounted to 593,000 MT, of which 82,000 MT were sent to destinations outside the EU-25 (mostly Russia), and 5,500 MT to new EU-member states (mainly Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland). The majority of exports (505,500 MT) was destined to other EU-15 countries. Note: All figures are in carcass weight equivalent.

Table 3: German production of beef

Year	Slaughter number (in 1000 heads)	Beef production (in 1000 metric tons)
1999	4,565	1,374
2000	4,285	1,304
2001	4,353	1,360
2002	4,272	1,317
2003	3,961	1,224
2004	4,141	1,263

Source: German Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection

Consumption

Due to consumer concerns in relation to BSE, per capita consumption of beef had dropped from 10.4 kg in 1999 to 6.8 kg in 2001³. In 2004, it rebounded to 8.7 kg. Meat consumption is projected to increase to 8.8 kg in 2005. However, due to the trend of healthier eating habits, meat consumption is not expected to reach pre-BSE consumption in the near future.

Related reports:

GM1033	11/27/2001	One year after the detection of BSE in Germany
GM3006	02/27/2003	German Cattle Identification and Beef Labeling

² Latest available data. Figures for 2005 will only become available in March.

³ In 2000, per capita consumption was recorded at 9.6 kg. However, as BSE was detected in November of 2000, this year cannot serve as a comparison.