



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

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Portugal

Livestock

Confirmed BSE cases total 66 head in 1998

1998

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Report Highlights:

The Official Portuguese veterinary services have just confirmed a new BSE case, bringing up the total 1998 BSE numbers to 66. More cases are expected to be confirmed shortly. An impending EU ban to Portuguese beef exports hangs over Portugal at present, while Spain has already uni-laterally implemented its own ban as of September 25. The clearance of impending and current threats now lies upon the EU acceptance of a new BSE control Plan. An SRM ban, the highlight of the new plan, is expected to come into force towards the end of October, and it will be accompanied by strict control mechanisms.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Lisbon [PO1], PO

A new BSE case has just been confirmed by the Portuguese sanitary authorities, bringing the total 1998 BSE cases up to 66 and the 1990 to 1998 accumulated total to 157. Brains from another 18 BSE-suspect bovines are still being tested by the official national veterinarian laboratory, and the local authorities expected that more cases will be identified in 1998, bringing the year's forecast total up to 80 to 90 head.

In spite of the rise in BSE numbers and an impending EU beef export ban, national authorities maintain that the disease could in fact be coming under control. Since the official acknowledgement of the disease in Portugal in 1993, a national EU-approved BSE eradication plan has been in place, under which 6,773 co-habitants were slaughtered. Further, since the GOP introduced a prohibition to use meat & bone meal in cattle and small ruminant feed in July 28, 1994, only two animals born after that date were found with BSE, all other BSE cases referring to animals born before the prohibition.

Nevertheless, continuously rising BSE cases led to a first inspection by EU sanitary officials in May, and to a second one in September 28 to October 02, 1998. After their first inspection, these officials made alarmistic projections that Portuguese BSE numbers could reach 160 head in 1998 and 260 head in 1999. Further, the country is currently faced with an impending EU ban to Portuguese beef exports, while Spain has unilaterally, but with EU connivance, implemented its own ban in September 25. To persuade the EU to give up on the ban and eventually have Spain lift its own, Portugal is now working to implement a new BSE control plan. A new SRM ban has been hastily approved and now awaits publication, which will address the EU's identified critical point in Portugal's defenses. Accordingly, the new SRM will extend prohibition to use meat & bone meal to all kinds of feed, thus eliminating cross-contamination risks at factory and farm level. Other measures considered include a sophisticated computerized animal movement control system, as well as rigorous inspection procedures to insure proper risk material destruction by all of the national 27 cattle slaughter-houses. GOP officials consider that the 1997 elimination of risk materials from human food guarantees food safety, and that no relation has been found between human CJD cases and BSE in Portugal. No cases of the new CJD variant have been identified either.

PORTUGAL: CONFIRMED BSE CASES

YEAR	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	TOTAL
BSE cases	1	1	1	3	12	14	29	30	90	181
	NOTE: 1998 and Total are forecast numbers. Confirmed 1998 BSE cases total 66 head on October 14.									

SOURCE: PORTUGUESE GENERAL VET DIRECTORATE

