



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

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United Kingdom

Livestock

UK cases of nvCJD, 1998

1999

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Report Highlights:

1998 saw a further twelve people die from new variant Creutzfeld Jacob Disease (nvCJD), the human form of BSE, bringing the total to thirty five since the first death from the disease in 1995.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
London [UK1], UK

According to latest data released by the UK Government's Department of Health, during 1998 there were twelve (12) probable deaths from new variant Creutzfeld Jacob Disease (nvCJD), the human form of BSE. This compares with ten (10) deaths in both 1997 and 1996. Three (3) people died from nvCJD in 1995, the first year such a death was recorded.

According to Department of Health officials, the unknowns associated with the incubation period of the disease, combined with the difficulties in detecting infections, mean that it is still too early to predict how many people will eventually die from nvCJD.

However, in December 1998 two scientists from London's City University released research suggesting that it is most likely that just eighty seven (87) people will die from nvCJD, with an absolute worst case maximum of three hundred and thirty (330). Using a most likely incubation period of just over seven (7) years, Professor Philip Thomas and Professor Martin Newby undertook a statistical risk analysis for nvCJD, correlating the incidence of BSE in the UK cattle herd with that of nvCJD victims. The study suggests that 1999 will see nvCJD cases at their peak, with an estimated sixteen (16) cases. From 2000 onwards, incidences of the disease will decline, becoming virtually extinct by 2006.

Using their statistical model, the professors had previously forecast that eleven (11) people would die from nvCJD in 1998, just one short of the actual death toll. The worst case scenario was based on an incubation period of sixteen years, the commonly accepted maximum to have triggered the number of nvCJD deaths seen thus far.