

Opinion of the
Scientific Steering Committee
on the
GEOGRAPHICAL RISK OF
BOVINE SPONGIFORM
ENCEPHALOPATHY (GBR) in
PAKISTAN

Adopted on 30/03/2001

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THE QUESTION

The Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) was asked by the Commission to express its scientific opinion on the Geographical BSE-Risk (GBR), i.e. the likelihood of the presence of one or more cattle being infected with BSE, pre-clinically as well as clinically, at a given point in time, in a number of Third Countries.

This opinion addresses the GBR of Pakistan.

THE BACKGROUND

In December 1997 the SSC expressed its first opinion on Specified Risk Materials where it stated, inter alia, that the list of SRM could probably be modulated in the light of the species, the age and the geographical origin of the animals in question.

In June 2000 the European Commission adopted a Decision on SRM (2000/418/EC), prohibiting the import of SRM from all Third Countries that have not been "satisfactorily" assessed with regard to their BSE-Risk.

In July 2000 the SSC adopted its final opinion on "the Geographical Risk of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (GBR)". This opinion described a method and a process for the assessment of the GBR and summarised the outcome of its application to 23 countries. Detailed reports on the GBR-assessment were published on the Internet for each of these countries.

In September 2000 the Commission invited 46 Third Countries, which are authorised to export products to the EU that are listed in annex II to the above mentioned SRM-Decision, to provide a dossier for the assessment of their GBR.

Until today 36 dossiers have been received, 6 are already assessed, and 30 are in different state of assessment.

This opinion concerns only one country, Pakistan. The Commission requested this opinion as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of SRM that will be requested from Pakistan. It is recommended that this opinion on the GBR of Pakistan is read in the light of the GBR-opinion of the SSC of July 2000.

The SSC is concerned that the available information was not confirmed by inspection missions as they are performed by the FVO in the Member States. It recommends that BSE-related aspects are included in the program of future inspection missions, as far as feasible.

THE ANALYSIS

From the UK export statistics it appears that 192 cattle were exported to Pakistan in 1987, representing together with the exports from NL and DK that occurred in 82, 83, 85 and 86 a **moderate external challenge** to which the 20t MBM that were exported from BE would have contributed. After 88, however, the external challenge was **negligible**, as no cattle and only negligible amounts of MBM were imported from BSE-affected countries. Even if the country's import statistics did not record such imports, it cannot be excluded that they took place and the BSE agent entered Pakistan in the 80s, mainly due to the cattle imports from UK. Unfortunately UK was not able to verify these exports.

The BSE/cattle system of Pakistan was and is **very unstable**. There is no ban on feeding MBM to cattle and therefore no controls are carried out. Even if cattle feed normally does not contain animal protein, it cannot be excluded. Rendering is apparently done at $133^{\circ}\text{C}/20^{\text{min}}/3^{\text{bar}}$ but there is no evidence of control of the correct application of these conditions. In addition, sub-industrial rendering is regarded likely to exist. Rendered material includes SRM, even if most SRM from "healthy" animals is entering the food chain. Fallen stock is burnt or buried. A passive surveillance system for BSE exists but it was found to be inefficient. Cross-contamination of cattle feed with MBM is possible both on farm and in feed mills.

Given the instability of the system, the external challenge that probably occurred in the late 80s could have led to an internal challenge when the imported cattle were rendered some time in the early 90s and the infectivity reached domestic cattle. If this happened the domestic cattle that were infected at that time would again have been processed in the late 90s, when again new domestic cases could have been initiated.

It is therefore concluded that it is unlikely, but cannot be excluded that one or several cattle that are (pre-clinically or clinically) infected with the BSE agent are currently present in the domestic herd of Pakistan (**GBR-II**).

A summary of the reasons for the current assessment is given in annex 1 to this opinion.

A detailed report on the assessment of the GBR of Pakistan is published separately on the Internet. The GBR-task force of the SSC-secretariat produced it and the GBR-Peer group reviewed it. The country had two opportunities to comment on different drafts of the report before the SSC took both, the report and the comments, into account for producing this opinion. The SSC appreciates the good co-operation of the country's authorities.

Pakistan– Summary of the GBR-Assessment, March 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION of EXTERNAL CHALLENGE and STABILITY
	1980-87: MODERATE; 1988-99: NEGLIGIBLE.		1980-99: VERY UNSTABLE.				
GBR-Level	Live Cattle imports	MBM imports	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	<p>The very unstable BSE/cattle system of Pakistan was probably exposed to a moderate external challenge from cattle imports in the 80s. It cannot be excluded that this led to an internal challenge in the early 90s when the imported cattle were processed and rendered. If at that time domestic cattle were exposed to BSE-infectivity these animals could either be still alive, while incubating the disease, or have already been slaughtered and processed. In the latter case a second generation of domestic cases cannot be excluded to exist.</p> <p>Given the instability of the system the GBR will increase, if BSE infectivity is already present.</p>
II	<p>UK: 1987: 192 animals Other BSE-affected countries: 82/83: 141 from NL 83, 85/86: 1099 from DK. Source: Eurostat</p> <p>No imports of live cattle from BSE-affected countries recorded in Pakistan's trade statistics since 1980.</p>	<p>UK: 43 t in 1995 Other BSE-affected countries: •92: 20 t; BE •94- 99: 5 t; DE Source: Eurostat</p> <p>No imports of MBM from BSE-affected countries recorded in Pakistan's trade statistics since 1980.</p>	<p>Not OK</p> <p>No feed ban.</p> <p>Even if voluntary feeding is unlikely, it may occur, and involuntary feeding is likely to happen.</p>	<p>Not OK</p> <p>Rendering according to EU-standard but no information on controls. Sub-industrial rendering likely to exist. Rendered material includes SRM, as far as it is not eaten, but not fallen stock.</p>	<p>Reasonably OK</p> <p>No SRM ban but most of the brain, spinal cord, and intestines of "healthy" animals used for human consumption. Fallen stock burnt or buried.</p>	<p><u>BSE-Surveillance</u>: Passive surveillance but found to be inefficient.</p> <p><u>Cross-contamination</u> of cattle feed with MBM is possible, mainly on farm, but also in feed mills. No examination of cattle feed for MBM.</p>	
GBR-trend	INTERNAL CHALLENGE						
↑	Internal challenge could have occurred since the early 90s and cannot be excluded still to be present.						