

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

Adopted on 09/02/2001

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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 Botswana.

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 from 01 April 2001 onwards 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 28 dossiers have been received and 27 are in an advanced state of assessment.

This opinion concerns only one country, Botswana. The Commission requested this opinion as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of SRM that will be requested from Botswana.

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

Botswana was exposed to an overall **negligible external challenge** throughout the reference period (1980-1999). No imports of live cattle or MBM, MM, BM or Greaves from countries that were affected by BSE were recorded by the country, nor were exports of these commodities found in the EUROSTAT statistics. Hence it is highly unlikely that the BSE agent was imported into Botswana.

The BSE/cattle system of Botswana was and is **neutrally stable**, i.e. it would probably not recycle and amplify BSE-infectivity, should that be introduced into the country. The main reason for this assessment is that feeding MBM to cattle is highly unlikely as 90% of the MBM and blood meal and 100% of the bone meal produced in the country are exported and no such products are imported. The fact that the only plant that produces MBM operates at $133^{\circ}\text{C}/20^{\text{min}}/3^{\text{bar}}$ supports this assessment, even if no evidence is provided on the apparently executed controls and their results. It cannot be excluded that sub-industrial rendering exists that operates under inappropriate conditions. SRM is rendered for feed.

It is concluded that the **GBR of Botswana is at level I**, i.e. it is highly unlikely that one or several cattle that are (pre-clinically or clinically) infected with the BSE agent are currently present in the domestic herd of Botswana.

Given the neutrally stable system it is unlikely that the GBR-level will increase in the future, as long as external challenges can be avoided.

This favourable assessment is mainly depending on the negligible external challenge. If this assumption should be proven wrong, the assessment would have to be revised.

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 Botswana is published separately on the Internet. It was produced by the GBR-task force of the SSC-secretariat and peer reviewed by the GBR-Peer group. 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.

BOTSWANA - Summary of the GBR-Assessment, February 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION OF EXTERNAL CHALLENGE AND STABILITY
	Negligible		Neutrally stable				
GBR level	Live Cattle	MBM	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	
I	No imports (Country and Eurostat data)	No imports (Country and Eurostat data)	Reasonably OK before 1998, OK since then	Reasonably OK	Not OK	<u>Surveillance</u>	Since no external challenge occurred, it is highly unlikely that any internal challenge occurred.
GBR-trend			RMBM-ban since 1998. Feeding MBM to cattle was and is unlikely as (a) no MBM is imported and (b) 90 % MBM and 100% of BM is exported.	133/20/3 standard used, and records kept but no clear evidence provided and sub-industrial rendering is not excluded.	SRM is rendered	Satisfactory surveillance since 1997.	
constant						<u>Cross-contamination</u>	INTERNAL CHALLENGE
						Measures to reduce cross-contamination in place since 1998.	Highly unlikely.