

Appendix 3

Executive summaries of the Croatia BSE Food Safety Risk Assessment Report and The Netherlands BSE Food Safety Risk Assessment Report

The full reports can be viewed here:

www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/bse/bsestatus/Pages/default.aspx

BSE
Food Safety
Risk
Assessment
Report
Croatia

Last Update: October 2012

Risk Assessment Production Process Section

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Executive summary

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is the regulatory body responsible for conducting Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) food safety assessments of countries that seek to export beef or beef products to Australia. FSANZ analyses the information provided by applicant countries and assigns them a BSE risk status. The requirements detailed in the *Australian Questionnaire to Assess BSE Risk*¹ are based on those of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (2009).² Croatia made a submission in 2010 to be assessed under the current BSE policy.

Croatia was previously assessed by the Australian BSE Country Categorisation Committee for Human Food Products (ABCCC) in 2003 for the purpose of country categorisation. The review was based on:

- a completed FSANZ country questionnaire and associated information
- Eurostat export statistics on exports of live cattle and of MBM and greaves from European Union (EU) member states during the period 1980 to 2000.

At the time of the ABCCC review, the ban on rendering Specified Risk Material (SRM) had been in place for five years, but only two years had elapsed since the introduction of the total ban on feeding meat and bone meal (MBM) to farm animals, the exclusion of fallen stock from rendering, and efficient BSE surveillance. It was concluded that at the time of the review, the risk of recycling and amplification of infectious material was very stable, but that it had been unstable in the recent past. Croatia was assigned to Category C, as a country assessed as having had considerable exposure to BSE risk materials, but having not reported any cases of BSE.

FSANZ has conducted an assessment of Croatian legislative measures concerning control and prevention of BSE, and an in-country assessment of the application and enforcement of these legislative measures. Croatia currently has robust controls to prevent the amplification of the BSE agent within the Croatian cattle population and contamination of the human food supply with the BSE agent. Control procedures were observed to be operating efficiently during the in-country assessment.

Importation of MBM or greaves is prohibited in Croatia, and effective border controls are in place. Repeated revisions of legislation has ensured that controls to prevent the importation of cattle incubating BSE, and food products of bovine origin that might contain the BSE agent, have been as rigorous as, or more rigorous than, OIE recommendations for more than a decade. The exception has been the importation of bone-in meat, which is not recommended by OIE, but because only bone-in meat inspected and certified as suitable for human consumption in an EU country has been permitted, this is not considered to be a significant source of risk. Croatia has been diligent in monitoring the BSE status of other countries and has kept up to date with evolving knowledge of BSE transmission.

Procedures are in place to protect against cross-contamination of feed between ruminant and non-ruminant species. Sampling is in place to ensure that fishmeal used in animal feed production does not contain mammalian proteins, although sampling has been mandatory only since 2006.

Food safety controls are established in Croatia to ensure effective protection of the human food supply from potential BSE contamination. Croatian regulations related to management of SRM such as central nervous tissue at slaughter are fully aligned with European Commission (EC) regulations and OIE recommendations. All beef and beef products are fully traceable back to the animal or animals from which it came, and all bovines in Croatia must

be identified and registered. All food business operators are required to have a procedure for the recall of products as part of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) requirements, and Croatia has a rapid alert system and procedures to deal with food safety emergencies.

BSE has been a notifiable disease in Croatia since 1996 and effective BSE education and awareness programs are in place. Farmers, veterinarians, and slaughterhouse personnel are educated to recognise the clinical signs associated with the disease through ongoing awareness and education exercises for BSE. There are incentives to facilitate reporting, and penalties for failure to report suspect clinical cases.

Diagnostic capability is good, and diagnostic tests compliant with Chapter 2.4.6 of the OIE *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* have been validated and are subject to appropriate, ongoing quality control, including collaborative inter-laboratory testing with national reference laboratories of other countries.

Croatia has a sophisticated, centralised animal identification system and database, which is fully aligned with EU regulations.

Croatia carries out Type A surveillance that complies with the guidelines in Articles 11.5.20 to 11.5.22 of the OIE's *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*. Surveillance point data currently meet the points target for the last seven years, although attainment of the target is a recent event. In-country assessment by FSANZ personnel confirmed that Croatian legislation relevant to BSE prevention and control is effectively enforced.

In conclusion, the risk of BSE entering and recycling within the bovine feed system or entering the human food supply in Croatia is currently well controlled. On the basis of the FSANZ BSE food safety assessment of Croatia, **Category 2** status for the Republic of Croatia is recommended.

BSE
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The Netherlands

Last Update: October 2012

Risk Assessment Production Process Section

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Executive summary

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is the regulatory body responsible for conducting Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) food safety assessments of countries that seek to export beef or beef products to Australia. According to the BSE food safety policy¹, FSANZ analyses the information provided by applicant countries and assigns them a BSE risk status. Information provided must address the requirements detailed in the *Australian Questionnaire to Assess BSE Risk* (Australian Questionnaire)² which are based on those of the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (2011) (TAHC).³ Imported beef and beef products are only permitted from countries which have been assessed and are assigned a favourable BSE risk status (Category 1 or Category 2). Countries seeking market access for fresh beef products are also subject to an assessment of animal quarantine risks by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Netherlands made a submission to FSANZ in May 2011 to be assessed for BSE food safety risk. The Netherlands has not been previously assessed by FSANZ for BSE risk status and currently does not hold market access for beef and beef products with Australia.

FSANZ has carried out an assessment of legislative measures concerning control and prevention of BSE in The Netherlands, and an in-country assessment of the application and enforcement of these legislative measures. Five main control areas were examined:

- (1) **Import controls** to prevent the release of the BSE agent through imports of animals or animal-derived products
- (2) **Feed ban controls** to prevent contamination of the animal feed supply with the BSE agent
- (3) **Food safety controls** to prevent contamination of the human food supply with the BSE agent
- (4) **Traceability and animal identification systems** to ensure animals and animal-derived products can be effectively identified and recalled if required
- (5) **Surveillance programs** to ensure that BSE affected animals are identified and removed from the feed and food production systems.

Bovines and bovine-derived products that are imported into the Netherlands are mainly sourced from European Union (EU) countries that are subject to harmonised legislation for BSE across the EU. Most live cattle, that are imported for veal production, are slaughtered at less than one year old. These animals represent negligible BSE risk. Bovine-derived products for feed production are also predominantly sourced from EU countries but only low risk materials (non-SRM) are permitted for import and only for specific use such as pet food or fertiliser. Beef or beef products for human consumption is sourced from EU countries and countries which have been assessed as negligible or controlled BSE risk status by the OIE. Only minimal numbers of bovines and minimal amounts of bovine-derived products have been imported from third countries (non-EU) and these are regulated through EU-based processes for approval of specific establishments in eligible countries and rigorous certification processes covering quarantinable diseases and food safety measures.

Since 2001, there has been an EU-wide total feed ban in place which prohibits the feeding of animal protein apart from fishmeal to farmed animals. The Netherlands has prohibited the feeding of ruminant protein to ruminants since 1989 and procedures to prevent cross-contamination of feed between ruminant and non-ruminant species have been in place since 1999. Procedures to comply with feed ban controls are applied at slaughter and during processing to prevent the recycling of the BSE agent. Stringent practices are enforced around the use of stockfeed so that feeding of ruminant protein to ruminants is prevented. Ante-mortem inspection procedures to identify animals potentially affected by BSE and post-mortem procedures to ensure the removal and destruction of specified risk materials are well-established. These practices are important to prevent the BSE agent from entering the feed and human food production systems.

Traceability systems include both an electronic traceability system that allows tracking of all animals, animal-derived feed, and animal-derived food products placed on the market (TRACES) and a cattle identification system which records all movements of cattle within The Netherlands and between EU countries. The Dutch cattle identification system has been in place since 1990 and has evolved to the point where there are few inaccuracies demonstrated (for example, animals that have left a holding with no destination recorded) and there is strong adherence to procedures to ensure all animals have correct identification. Cattle identification data is integrated into the TRACES system so that if a BSE case is confirmed, all cohort animals and feed sources for those animals can be identified and, if needed, removed from the market and appropriately dealt with under the BSE control program.

BSE has been a notifiable disease in The Netherlands since 1990 and since then 88 cases have been identified. On-going awareness and education programs have meant that farmers, veterinarians, and slaughterhouse personnel are well-informed and recognise BSE presentation in clinically affected animals, and understand actions which must be undertaken when a suspect clinical case is identified. Diagnostic capability is supported by a national reference laboratory which has played an internationally-recognised role in BSE diagnostics and research since the epidemic was first identified.

Improvements in diagnostic capability (the “BSE rapid test”) allowed the implementation of an active surveillance program for BSE in 2001. The Netherlands meets the requirements for “Type A” surveillance according to the guidelines set in Articles 11.5.20 to 11.5.22 of the TAHC. Type A surveillance is the highest level of surveillance recommended under the guidelines, allowing the detection of at least 1 case per 100,000, with a mandatory requirement to test older cattle which are at highest risk for BSE. The declining numbers of BSE-positive cattle identified through the active surveillance program in the past seven years are evidence that BSE control measures have been effectively implemented and enforced in The Netherlands.

BSE control measures were observed to be operating effectively during the in-country assessment conducted by FSANZ. Appropriate monitoring and inspection procedures were verified across the beef production chain. Auditing of establishments (feed mills, slaughterhouses, farms, and rendering plants) by the competent authority occurs through both random and targeted programs and significant adverse findings with respect to official BSE controls have not been identified by the competent authority as a result.

In conclusion, The Netherlands has clearly demonstrated that it has put into practice comprehensive and effective controls throughout the production chain to prevent the introduction and amplification of the BSE agent within the Dutch cattle population and any contamination of the human food supply with the BSE agent. Control measures exist across all levels of production including practices at the slaughterhouse, disease surveillance, feed production, animal identification and traceability, and import regulations. The integration of all of these measures at various establishments was observed first hand at the in-country verification visit. Therefore, this assessment concludes that imported beef and beef products sourced from The Netherlands pose a negligible risk to human health. It is recommended, therefore, that The Netherlands be given a **Category 1** for country BSE food safety risk status.