

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

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 Namibia.

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 summarized 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 authorized 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, Namibia. The Commission requested this opinion as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of SRM that will be requested from Namibia.

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

Only 2 live cattle from UK in 1990 (only according to Eurostat) and only 2.5 tons MBM, MM, BM and greaves were imported (2.5 tons of MBM from UK in 1997 according to Eurostat and UK data). Therefore the **external challenge** in Namibia has been since 1980 **negligible**.

The BSE/cattle system of Namibia was **extremely unstable** until 1998. Since the RMBM-ban of 1998 it is **very unstable**. Feed controls are lacking, rendering parameters are not equivalent to the $133^{\circ}\text{C}/20^{\text{min}}/3^{\text{bar}}$ standard and SRM is rendered.

Due to the absence of any external challenge, however, it is considered that no internal challenge occurred.

It is therefore concluded that 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 Namibia (**GBR-I**).

Given the very unstable system the GBR would increase as soon as any external challenge would occur. As long as this is prevented the GBR will remain at its current low level.

This favorable 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 Namibia 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

NAMIBIA - Summary of the GBR-Assessment, February 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION OF EXTERNAL CHALLENGE AND STABILITY
	Negligible		Extremely unstable until 1997 and very unstable since 9/1998				
GBR-level	Live cattle import	MBM - import	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	
I	No imports, hence a negligible external challenge (2 live cattle from UK in 90, only registered in Eurostat)	Only very small imports (2.5 tons from UK in 1997). Negligible external challenge.	Not OK before 9/1998 and “reasonably OK” thereafter	Not OK	Not OK	<u>Surveillance</u> is not sufficient.	Since no external challenge can be identified, the system is highly unlikely to have encountered an internal challenge.
GBR-trend			Before 1996: feeding MBM was common practice (in licks). RMBM ban in 1998 not yet properly implemented.	Rendering process is not equivalent to the 133°C/20 ^{min} /3 ^{bar} standard.	SRM is rendered. Part of the fallen stock is rendered.	<u>Cross-contamination</u> cannot be excluded.	
increasing							