

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

Adopted on 09/02/2001

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

### **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 Swaziland.

### **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 28 dossiers have been received and 27 are in an advanced state of assessment.

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

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**

Swaziland was exposed to a **negligible external challenge** throughout the reference period (1980-1999). No imports of live cattle nor of MBM, MM, BM or Greaves from countries that are affected by BSE have been registered by the national system nor were such exports recorded in Eurostat. Hence it is highly unlikely that the BSE agent was imported into the country.

The BSE/cattle system of Swaziland was and is **neutrally stable**. A feed ban exists since Nov. '99 but no information on its efficiency is available. Even if most cattle will not receive supplementary feed, some might do. However no MBM has ever been imported and the rendering in the only MBM-plant that exists in Swaziland was producing MBM under satisfactory process conditions until September 2000. However, sub-industrial scale rendering is assumed to exist, that is not able to reduce BSE-infectivity. An SRM-ban exists since 01/98. Before SRM were rendered for feed and may still be so on sub-industrial scale. Because, however, all domestically produced MBM is exported, the system is assessed as neutrally stable.

In view of the negligible external challenge 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 Swaziland (**GRB-I**).

Given the neutrally stable system, it is unlikely that the GBR-level will increase in the future, as long as external challenge 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 Swaziland 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.*

Swaziland - 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 have taken place from UK or other BSE-affected countries.	No imports have taken place from the UK or other BSE-affected countries.	Reasonably OK before 11/99, OK since then  MBM ban only installed since 11/1999. Feeding MBM to cattle is unlikely as (a) no MBM is imported and (b) all MBM is exported.	Reasonably OK until September 2000, not OK since then  Until 9/2000 equivalent to 133/20/3 standard, but no evidence of controls provided. Sub-industrial scale rendering might exist, not able to reduce BSE-infectivity. After 9/2000 not equivalent to 133/20/3 standard.	Not OK  Since January 1998, brain and spinal cord are excluded for entering the rendering plant, but on sub-industrial level it may still be included.	Surveillance: BSE not notifiable before 12/2000.  <u>Cross-contamination:</u> No measures in place.	No external challenge occurred.  If an external challenge would occur, it could reach domestic cattle and the extremely unstable system would recycle and amplify the introduced infectivity.
GBR-trend							INTERNAL CHALLENGE
Constant							Highly unlikely to have been present at any time because BSE-infectivity was never imported.