

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

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 Czech Republic.

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-assessments 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, Czech Republic. The Commission requested this opinion as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of SRM that will be requested from Czech Republic. It is recommended that this opinion on the Czech Republic is read in the light of the GBR 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

Czechoslovakia was exposed to a **high external challenge** from 1988-1992 (insufficient data on cattle imports before 88 and on MBM imports before 86). According to EUROSTAT data, during that period, in total 6,459 live cattle were exported to Czechoslovakia from FR, BE, NL, DK, and DE. During 1986-1990, in total 5,950 tonnes of MBM were exported from FR and in total 6,887 tonnes exported from DE, FR and BE, during 1991-1992.

Since 1993 the Czech Republic is **independent** and the **external challenge** has been **very high**. According to EUROSTAT data, in total 29,711 cattle were exported from FR, BE, NL, DK, DE and IT. The Czech Republic has also imported MBM, MM, BM or greaves from BSE affected countries. Since 1993-1999, in total 104,240 tonnes were exported from UK, FR, BE/Lux., NL, DK, DE and IT.

On the basis of information provided by the Czech Republic and by the Slovak Republic, between 1980 and 1992, the BSE/cattle system of Czechoslovakia is assessed as **very unstable**.

The BSE/cattle system of the Czech Republic was **very unstable** between 1993-1995, **unstable** in 1996 and is **neutrally stable** since 1997.

An RMBM ban was installed in 1991 in Czechoslovakia, only applicable to the current Czech Republic part. Its efficiency cannot be judged. In 1996, an MBM feeding ban was installed and controls started. Since 1999, analytical controls are also carried out. Rendering in the Czech Republic is done to the 133°C / 20min / 3 bars standards. There is no SRM feed ban but regulations for handling SRM have been put in place since end 2000. Cross-contamination of cattle feed with MBM was likely and can still not be excluded. Passive surveillance of BSE was non-existent before 1997 and not sufficient until 2001. An active surveillance started on 1st February 2001 and this is highly welcome.

It is concluded that it is likely but not confirmed that one or several cattle that are (pre-clinically or clinically) infected with the BSE agent are currently present in the domestic herd of Czech Republic (**GBR-III**).

In view of the neutral stability of the system it would follow that the GBR would remain as it is as long as no new external challenges appear.

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 Czech Republic 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.

Czech Republic – Summary of the GBR-Assessment, March 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION of EXTERNAL CHALLENGE and STABILITY
	1980-87: NOT ADDRESSED *; 1988-92: HIGH; 1993-99: VERY HIGH.		1980-95: VERY UNSTABLE; IN 1996: UNSTABLE; Since 1997: NEUTRALLY STABLE				
GBR-Level	Live Cattle imports	MBM imports	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	
III	<p><u>Before 1993 (Czechoslovakia):</u></p> <p>6,459 live cattle exported mainly from DE, FR, DK (EUROSTAT data, imports from UK negligible)</p> <p>Country dossier indicates 2,858 animals imported into the current territory of CZR</p>	<p><u>Before 1993:</u></p> <p>In total around 6900 t mainly from FR and DE (EUROSTAT).</p> <p><u>Since 1993:</u></p> <p>Around 105,000 t in total, mainly from DE.</p>	<p>Not OK before 1996, reasonably OK since 1996</p> <p>RMBM ban in 1991 but implementation cannot be judged.</p> <p>MBM feeding ban in 1996 and beginning of controls.</p> <p>Cross-contamination still not excluded.</p>	<p>Reasonably OK before 1996, OK since 1997</p> <p>Rendering done to EU standard of 133/20/3. Controls since 1997.</p>	<p>Not OK</p> <p>SRM are included in cattle feed. Regulations for handling SRM in place since 2000.</p> <p>SRM ban foreseen.</p>	<p><u>BSE surveillance:</u></p> <p>BSE notifiable since 1991. BSE surveillance non-existent before 1997 and not sufficient until 2001.</p> <p><u>Cross-contamination:</u></p> <p>Risk of cross-contamination of cattle feed with MBM controlled since 1999.</p>	<p>Before 1993, the very unstable system of Czechoslovakia was exposed to a high external challenge (MBM imports). It is likely that an internal challenge occurred. Since 1993, the still very unstable system of the Czech Republic was also exposed to a very high external challenge.</p> <p>Without imports GBR will decrease over time, due to absence of recycling.</p>
GBR-trend	<p><u>Since 1993:</u></p> <p>Around 30,000 animals in total, mainly from FR, DE, DK and NL.</p>						INTERNAL CHALLENGE
↑							<p>Since 1988 internal challenge was likely to be present and growing.</p>

* Data insufficient