

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

Adopted on 30/03/2001

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

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 Singapore.

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)". It describes a method and a process for the assessment of the GBR and summarised the outcome of its application to 23 countries. The SSC suggests reading this opinion and the related report in the light of its GBR opinion of July 2000. 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 a different state of assessment.

This opinion concerns only one country, Singapore. The Commission requested this opinion as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of SRM that will be requested from Singapore. It is recommended that this opinion on Singapore is read in the light of the GBR-opinion 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

The external challenge Singapore was exposed to was **negligible** from 1980-1984, **high** in 1985, **moderate** from 1986-1993 and **high** since 1994. Singapore has not imported any live cattle from the UK or other BSE affected countries according to all data sources. However Singapore has imported MBM, MM, BM or greaves from BSE affected countries. The EUROSTAT and country dossier data differ considerably. According to EUROSTAT, during 1986-1990, 49 t were imported from the UK and 53 t from IT. A further 801 t were imported from the UK during 1991-1993. During 1994-1999, 4195 t were imported from the UK, IRL, DE, FR and IT. However, according to the country dossier the only import was 3773 t of MBM from NL during 1985, and it should be noted that Singapore is a major transshipment hub for the region.

The BSE/cattle system of Singapore was **stable** from 1980-1996 and **very stable** since 1997. Since 1997 there has been a ban on feeding MBM to cattle, but insufficient information is provided to assess its efficiency. Before 1997 it was in theory possible, although not common practice, to feed cattle with MBM supplemented cattle feed. There has not been rendering or sub-industrial rendering in Singapore during the reference period. There is no SRM ban. All SRM is destined for human consumption, and condemned SRM is incinerated. The BSE surveillance system was found to be inefficient, but active surveillance was implemented on 1/2/2001 and hence improved substantially. Cross-contamination is excluded in Singapore as no compound feed for cattle is produced locally, feed is mixed on the farm and no co-species farming exists.

Despite the high MBM imports in Singapore, of which a major part was in transit, feeding cattle with this MBM was highly unlikely since all cattle feed is mixed on the three farms, there is only a very small cattle herd in an agro-technology park and the amount imported would be too high for the animal production in Singapore. In combination with the absence of recycling, it is 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 Singapore (**GBR-I**).

If some of the domestic cattle would have had access to MBM imported from NL in 1985, these cattle could have been infected, but they would have died already. Since there is no possibility of recycling, this risk would have disappeared in the 90s.

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 Singapore 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.

Singapore – Summary of the GBR-Assessment, March 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION of EXTERNAL CHALLENGE and STABILITY
	1980-84: Negligible; 1985: High; 1986-93: Moderate; since 1994: High.		1980-96: Stable; Since 1997: Very Stable.				The registered external challenges could theoretically have led to an import of the BSE-agent in the 80's, particularly if some of the 1985 MBM-imports from the Netherlands were contaminated and reached domestic cattle. Given the information on the husbandry system this is possible but not likely. However, if such an internal challenge would have developed, it would have met the stable system and infectivity would not have been recycled. Over time it was eliminated from the system when the infected cattle, should those have existed, died. As the average age of the population is high (5 years) and the normal age at slaughter is 6-7 years, a detection of clinical cases seems likely, particularly after 1994.
GBR-Level	Live Cattle imports	MBM imports	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	
I	<p><u>UK</u>: No imports</p> <p><u>Other BSE affected countries</u>: no imports (all data sources).</p>	<p><u>UK</u>: 1858 t (86-99)</p> <p><u>Other BSE affected countries</u>: According to EUROSTAT: 86- 99: about 3,000 t imported from IT, IRL, FR, DE.</p> <p>According to CD, only 3773 t of MBM imported from NL in 1985. Singapore is a major transshipment hub in the region.</p>	<p>Not OK before 1997, reasonable OK since 1997</p> <p>MBM feed ban since 1997. MBM not fed to cattle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No co-species farming • No animal protein fed to cattle. • No local feed mills where cattle feed is produced. • Small cattle population only in park, without any incentive to use MBM. 	<p>OK</p> <p>No rendering or sub-industrial rendering during 1980-99.</p>	<p>OK</p> <p>No SRM ban. All SRM for human consumption. Condemned SRM incinerated.</p>	<p><u>BSE-Surveillance</u>: Inefficient, though active surveillance improved since 1/2/2001 and assessed satisfactory since.</p> <p><u>Cross-contamination</u>: Of cattle feed with MBM highly unlikely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No compound feed for cattle produced locally • Feeds are mixed on farm. • No co-species farming. 	
GBR-trend							INTERNAL CHALLENGE
→							Internal challenge not present during 1980-1984, not fully excluded since 1985, but decreasing since the mid 90s because potentially infected cattle disappeared from the system. At present it is highly unlikely that potentially infected cattle are still present.