

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

Adopted on 29/06/2001

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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 Nigeria.

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)", which 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 Third Countries that 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 52 dossiers have been received from Third Countries, 32 are already assessed, and 19 are in different states of assessment.

This opinion concerns only one country, Nigeria. The Commission requested this opinion following the provision by the country of a dossier for the assessment of their epidemiological status with regard to BSE. The result will serve as essential input into its Decision concerning the treatment of exports from Nigeria with regard to SRMs and other relevant products. It is recommended that this opinion on Nigeria is read in the light of the GBR opinion of the SSC of July 2000.

The Commission requested this SSC opinion on the GBR of this, and of all Third Countries that decided to provide the necessary information, as input into its Decision concerning the treatment of exports from these countries in view of BSE in general and SRM in particular.

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 SSC is further concerned of the less than optimal quality of the available information on international trade of products that could carry the BSE agent, in particular bovine derived animal meals or bovine live animals. This is of particular relevance whenever the assessment of the GBR indicates that the BSE/cattle system of a country would (have) recycle(d) the BSE-agent.

THE ANALYSIS

Nigeria was exposed to a **high** external challenge from 1980 to 1990 and a **moderate** one from 1991 to 2000. In both periods the MBM imports were most important. According to Eurostat 9,381 tonnes of “flour, meal and pellets of meat and offal, unfit for human consumption; greaves” were exported to Nigeria from France, Belgium (after 1986), Italy (in 1989), and DK. Sporadic exports occurred from UK in 1980, 82, 87, and 89, totalling 160 tonnes. Exports from BE and FR continued from 1991 to 1993, reaching 583 tonnes; and 666 tonnes were exported from IT in 1999 and 2000. The UK exports in 1994 (2t) and 2000 (43t) are regarded insignificant because from 1996 only non-mammalian meals could be exported. In comparison the exports of live bovines to Nigeria were less important. From 1980-1988 about 450 cattle were exported from UK to Nigeria and about 1391 were exported from other BSE-affected countries. Most (997) of the latter were exported to Nigeria before 1986, mostly from IT (1981) and DK (1983). In 1989/90 287 cattle were exported from DE, and in 1998 107 from FR to Nigeria.

Overall these exports, albeit not confirmed by country import data, make it likely that the BSE-agent entered the country, most probably in the period 1986 to 1990 when 117t MBM were exported to Nigeria from the UK and 4,724t from FR, BE, IT and DK.

The BSE/cattle system of Nigeria is assessed as **stable** throughout the reference period (1980-2000). While feeding MBM to cattle is still legally possible, most cattle will never receive supplementary feeding. However, it is regarded possible that some dairy herds do and could therefore consume MBM. Rendering is reported as being completely absent from Nigeria, including sub-industrial scale operations. The only MBM that might have reached cattle could therefore only be imported. There is no SRM-ban but brain and spinal cord are regarded edible and are generally consumed by humans. Also fallen stock, if still edible, is consumed. The non-edible offal and fallen stock are buried or burned. BSE has been notifiable since 1998. In that year a nation wide programme examined 188,000 non-symptomatic cattle for BSE but neither the methods nor the detailed results were communicated. Since then no specific BSE surveillance has taken place. Cross-contamination is likely to occur in the feed-mills of the country - no information was made available on measures taken to avoid it. It could enable imported MBM to reach domestic cattle.

The stable system of Nigeria (1980-2000) was faced with a high to moderate external challenge. The distribution of the imports over time and the described situation in the country make it unlikely that an internal challenge occurred, while it cannot be excluded. The stable system would, however, have reduced over time any internal challenge that might have occurred.

It is therefore concluded that it is unlikely, but cannot be excluded that one or several cattle that are (pre-clinically or clinically) infected with the BSE agent are currently present in the domestic herd of Nigeria (**GBR- II**).

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 Nigeria 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.

Nigeria – Summary of the GBR-Assessment, June 2001							
	EXTERNAL CHALLENGE		STABILITY				INTERACTION of EXTERNAL CHALLENGE and STABILITY
	1980-90: HIGH; 1991-2000: MODERATE.		1980-2000: STABLE.				
GBR-Level	Live Cattle imports	MBM imports	Feeding	Rendering	SRM-removal	Surveillance, cross-contamination	
II	Only UK and Eurostat data but not contested by country. <u>UK:</u> 411 (UK data 440) in 1980-1983, 18 in 1987 and 6 in 1988	Only UK and Eurostat data but not contested by country. <u>UK:</u> Sporadic imports. 1980: 7t, 1982: 36t, 1987: 17t, 1989: 100t (only UK data), 1994: 2t (only UK data), 2000: 43t (only UK data). <u>Non UK:</u> Total: 10,630t Continuous exports 1980-93: 80-92: 7,645t FR 87-95: 1,630t BE 1989: 700t IT 99-2000: 645t IT	Not OK 1980-2000 Feeding MBM to cattle is legally possible and cannot be excluded. No information on feed controls.	OK, '80-2000 No rendering exists or has ever existed in the country, also no sub-industrial rendering.	OK, '80-2000 SRM are regarded edible and non-edible materials are buried or burned.	<u>BSE Surveillance:</u> BSE notifiable since 1998. The existing passive surveillance is not sufficient to detect BSE cases if they exist and no active surveillance is in place. The BSE monitoring programme of 1988 checked 188,000 asymptomatic cattle over 24 or 36 months but apparently only by visual inspection. <u>Cross-contamination:</u> Likely to occur.	The recorded external challenge met a stable system. Even if it cannot be excluded that the imported MBM reached some cattle, these domestic cases would not have been recycled and the BSE-agent could not be amplified. This makes it unlikely that today domestic cattle in Nigeria are carrying the BSE agent. However, in view of the more recent MBM imports it cannot be excluded.
GBR-trend	<u>Non UK:</u> Sporadic imports. 1981: 779 from IT, 1983: 189 from DK, 1984: 6 from NL 1986: 23 from NL 89/90: 287 from DE 1997: 107 from FR						INTERNAL CHALLENGE Internal challenge unlikely to be present but not excluded.