

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

BSE: PRIVATE SUBMISSION OF BOVINE BRAIN - DEALLER

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Date: 8 December 1993
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1. Further to my minute of 17 November, and your minute to the Parliamentary Secretary of 22 November, I have today received further information on this submission.
2. Gerald Wells has not received brain tissue from Dealler as promised. Instead it is thought to have been submitted to the Grange Veterinary Laboratory, Weatherby where it was examined by Dr D F MacDougall. Having suspected a spongiform encephalopathy, he then consulted with Tony Palmer, neurologist/neuropathologist at Cambridge Veterinary School (now retired). Tony Palmer has confirmed a diagnosis of spongiform encephalopathy, and I understand is happy that it is true BSE rather than hepatic encephalopathy as might be expected from a ketotic cow.
3. Dr MacDougall informed the DVO Leeds of the result (dealt with by Roger Nelson in the DVOs absence), but did not have details of the farm of origin as these were not supplied by Dealler. I advised that we inform Dr MacDougall that the disease is notifiable, and that information on the farm of origin should be supplied to MAFF. Until then we can't be certain that we are indeed dealing with the same case.

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4. While it was not thought appropriate to speak to Dr MacDougall directly, Gerald Wells was asked to speak to Palmer, and has confirmed that the lesions are typical of BSE, and that Grange Veterinary Laboratory still intend to submit material to CVL.

5. Once we have conclusive evidence that this suspect is the case from Snowden, normal procedure would be to confirm disease there, pay compensation as if slaughtered by MAFF, including the costs of arriving at the diagnosis, less any income derived from the carcass. Had the diagnosis been carried out at a VIC the charges would simply have been waived.

6. The most likely attack from Lacey and Dealler will be that we are attempting to distort the epidemic by refusing to slaughter suspects, and that in theory consumers could be put at risk if the suspect had been slaughtered for human consumption. In this instance, having been killed by barbiturate overdose, the carcass would not have been fit for human consumption, but we do not yet know its eventual fate.

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