

TYRRELL COMMITTEE: PAPER ON TRANSMISSION OF BSE TO A PIG

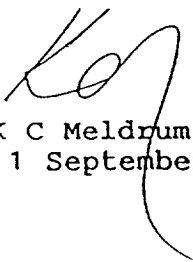
I refer to the paper attached to your letter to Hilary Pickles of 10 September. May I, at the outset, reiterate that we should avoid dissemination of papers relating to this experimental finding to prevent premature release of the information.

Para 3, Future action. We already have in place a general surveillance programme for pigs through the Veterinary Investigation Service in England and Wales and the Scottish Veterinary Investigation Service in Scotland. In addition we are already carrying out a detailed epidemiological investigation into every cat confirmed as affected with a spongiform encephalopathy. We can reinforce the surveillance programme for pigs through the Veterinary Record and by routine contact between Veterinary Investigation Centres and the practising arm.

Para 4, line 8, mentions "susceptible species" - this being defined in paragraph 5. It might be better to define what is susceptible before you describe the action to be taken!

I am somewhat surprised that the Committee is not recommending that the specified offals should be excluded from poultry rations. If they are taking a view that poultry should not be included in the ban then I must question the rationale for two reasons. Because of the short life span of poultry it is possible that the agent could be carried from the feed through the slaughterhouse in various tissues but possibly without replication and there is the subsidiary problem that the meat and bone meal in the gut could be fed back to other species through poultry offal meal.

Para 7. For some time I have been concerned about the comments that raw materials for medicines should be sourced from countries where BSE in cattle is believed not to have occurred. This is a very weak argument to deploy since detection of disease depends upon the surveillance programme and notification procedures. I would prefer to source such material in countries whether neither BSE nor scrapie is present and which have not imported significant quantities of British cattle or meat and bone meal.



K C Meldrum
11 September 1990

Mr R C Lowson

cc Mrs E A Attridge
Mr R Bradley, CVL
Mr A Lawrence
Dr H Pickles, DoH