BRIEFING

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Contact: Peter Rudman

BSE TRANSMISSION EXPERIMENTS IN PIGS

The MAFF Food Safety Directorate yesterday announced that the attempt to transmit BSE to pigs has been successful; one animal inoculated parenterally (ie: other than by the oral route, in this case directly into the brain) succumbed following a massive dose of infected cattle brain tissue. More detail is given in the attached News Release of 24th September.

Because of this the Government has decided to introduce forthwith a statutory ban on the inclusion of specified ruminant offal in all animal feed. This material (brain, thymus, tonsils, spinal tissue and spleen) has previously been excluded for ruminant and human consumption, and voluntarily witheld in many cases from pig, poultry and pet food. The NFU has expressed its support for the new precautionary measure as in line with policy drawn up in June of this year.

It is stressed that the disease was 'planted' in the pig (one of 10), under extreme artificial conditions and does not imply that natural transmission is possible; neither of course does it suggest any human health implication.

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