

# Press Release

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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## BSE: TRANSMISSION EXPERIMENTS IN PIGS

Following the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food statement today on research into the transmissibility of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Agriculture Minister Lord Skelmersdale said:

"The Government has today taken the ultra-precautionary measure of making statutory the code of practice on the inclusion of specified cattle offal in feed to all animals and birds.

It has been done on the advice of the Tyrrell Committee, who, following the results of an experiment into inoculating massive amounts of BSE-infected tissue into a range of other animals, have discussed the findings of one pig infected out of the 8 inoculated, hence their recommendation to the Government to take this step.

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I would like to stress that the experiment has had the added value showing what the effects in an infected pig are. These are distinctive that any vet would have spotted it either in the animal behaviour or in the laboratory. No farm pig in the United Kingdom has shown such signs. There is absolutely no risk to humans but the action we have taken is purely precautionary to make certain that a remote risk to pigs and other animals is neutralised."

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The relevant legislation is the Disease of Animals (Feeding Stuffs) Order (Northern Ireland) 1990. This Order revokes and re-enacts with amendments the Diseases of Animals (Feeding Stuffs) Order (Northern Ireland) 1989 ("the 1989 Order).

The prohibition in the 1989 Order on the feeding of ruminant derived protein to ruminants continues.

2. The amendments prohibit the sale, supply and use of specific bovine offal and feeding stuffs containing specified bovine offal (which comprises the brain, spinal cord, spleen, thymus, tonsils and intestines of a bovine animal) or any animal protein derived from it for feeding to any kind of mammal, except man, and any kind of four-footed beast which is not a mammal and any bird. The Bovine Offals (Prohibition Regulation) 1989 banned the use of specified offals for human consumption.

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3 The Order further prohibits the exportation of feeding stuffs which contain specified bovine offal or material derived from such offal from Northern Ireland to a Member State of the European Communities except under the authority of and in accordance with the conditions (if any) of a licence granted by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

4. Up to September 24, 1990, there were 102 confirmed cases of BSE in cattle in Northern Ireland.

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