

BSE
23/11/29.

BSE/25
Jee

Ref: Met201

1. Dr Metters
2. Mrs Baxter

From: Dr H Pickles
Med ISD/3

Date: 20 September 1990

Copy: Dr Smales
Mr Hagger MCA
Dr Richardson MDD
Dr Harper Med ISD3
Mr Murray EHF3
Mr Shroot ID

SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY IN PIGS

1. Further to CMO's note of 23 August and mine of 18 September we now have the text of the formal advice from the Tyrrell Committee to MAFF/DH Ministers. This is attached. The statement about human health is helpful.

2. Subject to our approval, MAFF intend to make this advice public as an attachment to one of their press releases, given out at a press conference, now postponed on Mr Gummer's instructions from Friday to some time (probably 3pm) on Monday (24th). Is PS(H) content for the Tyrrell committee advice, submitted to both departments, to be released by MAFF in this way? The full text of the MAFF press release will be circulated for information once it is available.

3. The minutes of the Tyrrell committee, which do not form part of the formal advice to Ministers, ask that the Medicines Control Agency and Medical Devices Directorate be alerted to the new information about pigs. This has been done but we intend this will remain confidential.



Hilary Pickles
Room 414
Eileen House
Ext: 22832

856

90/9.20/2.1

4017-2015

SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

EXPERIMENTAL TRANSMISSION OF BOVINE SPONGIFORM
ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE) TO A PIG

1. The Committee has considered the implications of recent work at the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) in which pigs were inoculated experimentally with BSE. One of these became sick and was confirmed to have spongiform encephalopathy.
2. The animal was one of eight which were inoculated into the brain and other tissues with a massive quantity of material from the brains of cows suffering from BSE. On the basis of what is known about other spongiform encephalopathies this method of giving the agent is more likely to lead to disease than giving it by mouth. Although spongiform encephalopathy has not been found in a pig in the past, the result of this experiment cannot be ignored.
3. Since this result shows that pigs can get spongiform encephalopathy, even though there is no evidence that they have done so in the field, we believe that pigs should no longer be fed with protein derived from bovine tissues which might contain the BSE agent, ie. those "specified" bovine offals that are already excluded from human consumption. It would make sense to extend this prohibition to feed for all species, including household pets, as other species have now developed spongiform encephalopathies. We are aware that many animal feed compounders and pet food manufacturers are already applying such a ban on a voluntary basis.
4. As far as human health is concerned, however, we do not believe that this interim result requires any further action to be taken.