CVO BSE 1 20 Reference .....

COMMERCIAL - IN CONFIDENCE

SPREADING OF UNPROCESSED BLOOD ON LAND

1. Thank you for your undated minute received recently.

2. I think we need to be clear about the reasons - if any - for our concern about the issue. The practice may be "unsavoury" and it may be "smelly", but neither is a reason why MAFF should intervene. Nor should we be over-influenced by demands from renderers, some of whom (no doubt for good commercial reasons) are simultaneously showing a marked reluctance to handle other types of animal waste.

3. As your table shows the practice is widespread and may have become more so. It has also been going on for a long time without, so far as I am aware, being responsible for the spread of animal disease. The emergence of BSE does not alter the situation much: there is no evidence that the titre of infectious agent which may be present in blood is significant, and when we last checked there had been no cases of BSE on the organic farms which used blood as a fertiliser. The Waste Food Order controls seem to be effective in practice. Time intervals are not laid down between spreading and stock access, but flexibility is necessary to allow for variability in weather and soil conditions, and it would be difficult to make statutory provision for this.

4. I agree that Ministers should be made aware of the situation, and that a note about the implementation of the animal waste Directive would provide a suitable opportunity for doing so. However, I do not think that there is much veterinary justification for advocating change. There is no evidence of a practical risk under normal circumstances, and we already have powers when outbreaks of particular diseases occur.

K C Taylor
15th February 1991

Mr A J Lawrence

cc Mr Meldrum
Mr Crawford
Mr Lowson
Mr Maslin
Mr Lackenby

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