



BSE Testing Update

The OIE (International Animal Disease Organization) BSE testing requirements changed recently. The old system was based on a risk analysis, plus testing enough cattle to detect 2 BSE cases per million head. The age of the animals tested was not a factor. Under the old OIE system, Canada would have moved into a higher risk category if more than 14 BSE cases were discovered in a 12 month period.

The new system uses “points”. More points are assigned for testing the highest risk animals (i.e. 4 to 7 year old animals with nervous system symptoms). The fewest points are awarded for testing animals that are the least likely to develop the disease (i.e. young health animals tested at slaughter).

OIE Point System for BSE Surveillance				
Age	Healthy slaughter	Deadstock	Emergency slaughter	Clinical suspect
1 to 2 years	0.01	0.2	0.4	N/A
2 to 4 years	0.1	0.2	0.4	260
4 to 7 years	0.2	0.9	1.6	750
7 to 9 years	0.1	0.4	0.7	220
Over 9 years	0	0.1	0.2	45

OIE risk categories

Negligible Risk: before Canada can fit into this category, we must:

1. have a risk assessment demonstrating appropriate and effective management measures
2. meet Type B surveillance requirements (i.e. 150,000 points over 7 years)
3. have (for at least 7 years)
 - a program to have industry participants report all cases with clinical signs
 - compulsory notification and investigation of all animals with clinical signs
 - examination of (brain) samples in an approved laboratory
4. not feed ruminant meat and bone meal to ruminants for at least 8 years
5. have no home-grown BSE cases for at least 11 years
6. identify all animals born in the same herd within a year of positive cases, control their movements, and completely destroy them at slaughter or death.

Controlled Risk: before Canada can fit into this category, we must:

1. have a risk assessment demonstrating appropriate and effective management measures
2. meet Type A surveillance requirements (i.e. 300,000 points over 7 years)
3. meet Type B surveillance requirements after this (i.e. 150,000 points over 7 years)
4. have: a program to have industry participants report all cases with clinical signs
 - compulsory notification and investigation of all animals with clinical signs
 - examination of (brain) samples in an approved laboratory
5. ruminant meat and bone meal (MBM) may have been fed to ruminants in the past 8 years
6. identify all animals born in the same herd within a year of positive cases, control their movements, and completely destroy them at slaughter or death.

Undetermined Risk: doesn't meet either of the other categories.

OIE Surveillance Types

Type A Surveillance (controlled risk): This is designed to determine the prevalence of the disease. Since Canada has more than one million cattle older than 24 months, we would need to obtain 300,000 points over 7 years (42,857 points per year). We would have to test at least 57 cows with clinical signs in the 4 to 7 year age group each year. Testing deadstock would require between 48,000 (4 to 7 year old) to 107,000 (over 7 years old) cows per year.

Type B Surveillance (controlled and negligible risk): This is maintenance surveillance once a country is recognized as controlled risk. Canada would need to test half as many animals (150,000 points over 7 years). This equates to 29 head with clinical signs in the 4 to 7 year age group each year. Testing deadstock would require between 24,000 (4 to 7 years old) to 54,000 (over 7 years old) head per year.

Canada's BSE Safeguards

1. BSE Surveillance

BSE has been a reportable disease in Canada since 1990, and a surveillance program began in 1992. A total of 122,594 cattle have been tested for BSE in Canada from January 2004 to October 2006.

2. National Identification Program

International experts have acknowledged that the Canadian beef industry's Canadian Cattle Identification Program has been a very valuable tool in identifying the herd of origin of Canada's BSE cases, and has aided in efforts to trace their offspring.

3. Enhanced Feed Ban

Ruminant meat and bone meal has not been allowed in cattle diets since 1997. In July 2006, Canada approved an enhanced feed ban, which will prevent all specified risk materials from being used in any animal feeds or fertilizer. Specified risk materials are tissues that are most likely to contain the BSE prion. These include the distal ileum from all cattle, as well as the eyes, the brain and attached nerves, and the spinal cord and attached nerves. International experience has shown that removing these materials from the feed supply is the single most effective way of stopping BSE transmission.

Canada's risk classification under the OIE system

Canada has not been categorized for BSE risk by the OIE. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency plans to apply for OIE classification this fall. We should be eligible for the controlled risk category, based on the safeguards we have in place. Based on our past surveillance levels, we have likely met our requirements under Type A surveillance, and can justify a move to Type B surveillance.

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