

This is a provisional English translation of an excerpt from the original full report.

## **Risk Assessment Report**

### **Cattle meat and offal imported to Japan from Ireland**

(Prions)

Food Safety Commission of Japan (FSCJ)

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#### **ABSTRACT**

FSCJ was requested by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) to conduct risk assessment of cattle meat and offal imported from Ireland and Poland. Using reference materials and documents submitted by the MHLW regarding the BSE situation in the two countries, the FSCJ assessed the risk of the BSE agent in cattle meat and offal from Ireland prior to those from Poland in relation to such border measures as restriction of cattle age and definition of Specific Risk Materials (SRMs).

Based on not only the findings obtained through the FSCJ's risk assessment of the BSE agent that had been conducted before this assessment, but also on the current situation of implementation of BSE control measures and relating information on definition of SRMs and the situation of slaughtering processes, among other factors, FSCJ thoroughly assessed risks arisen from consumption of meat and offal derived from cattle born, raised, and slaughtered in Ireland.

A large number of BSE cases have been reported in European countries, mainly in the United Kingdom (UK), with a peak in the early 1990s. According to relevant reports issued by World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations, a possible link between variant Cruetzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) and BSE was first pointed out in 1996. By March 2013, a total of 190,643 cases of BSE have been reported worldwide. The annual number peaked at 37,316 in 1992, but decreased remarkably to 45 in 2010, 29 in 2011, and 21 in 2012, as a result of reinforced feed restriction and other control measures. No cases of BSE have been confirmed among cattle born in the past nine years since the time when one case was confirmed in the birth cohort 2004.

The result of the risk assessment is summarized as follows.

Taking into account the situation of infection of cattle with the BSE agent, the risk of BSE, and the species barrier to BSE transmission between human and bovine, and assuming that the current risk management, including the regulations for feed and others, continues to be implemented, development of vCJD is highly unlikely to be induced by consumption of meat and offal (excluding tonsils and distal ileum) derived from cattle born, raised, and slaughtered at the age of 30 months or younger in Ireland.

Therefore, considering thoroughly available evidence, FSCJ reached the following conclusions on the restriction of cattle age and definition of Specific Risk Materials (SRMs) for meat and offal (excluding tonsils and distal ileum) derived from cattle born, raised, and slaughtered in Ireland.

(1) Restriction of cattle age

As for the meat and offal imported from Ireland, a difference between “the ban on import” and setting the age threshold\* for import at “30 months” in the risk to human health that could arise from consumption of BSE prion in meat and offal would be extremely small. Therefore, the effects on human health of this change of the border measure are negligible.

(2) Definition of SRMs

As for the meat and offal imported from Ireland, a difference between “the ban on import” and the import of meat and offal containing no SRMs defined as “tonsils and distal ileum (limited to the part of two meters from the junction to the caecum) from all ages and head (excluding the tongue and cheek meat), spinal cord and vertebral column from over 30 months age” in the risk to human health that could arise from consumption of BSE prion in meat and offal would be extremely small. Therefore, the effects on human health of this change of the border measures are negligible.

\*Age threshold means the limit of age of cattle from which meat and offal are derived.