

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

## **Risk Assessment Report**

### **Revised countermeasures against BSE in sheep and goats**

(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 an assessment on human health risks associated to proposed revisions of the current countermeasures against BSE in sheep and goats. Using materials and documents provided by the MHLW, FSCJ investigated the situation of the occurrence of BSE in sheep and goats in Japan, US, Canada, France the Netherlands, Ireland, Poland, Brazil, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, and Italy.

Based on the investigation results, and also on the findings obtained through the former FSCJ's risk assessment of the BSE agent as well as relating information on BSE infectivity and prevalence in sheep and goats, FSCJ thoroughly assessed risks arisen from consumption of meat and offal derived from sheep and goats born, raised, and slaughtered in the above countries.

A large number of BSE cases in cattle 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. Until October 2015, a total of 190,668 cases (as of the end of October) of BSE have been reported worldwide. The annual number peaked at 37,316 in 1992, but decreased remarkably to 21 in 2012, seven in 2013, 12 in 2014 and six in 2015 (as of the end of October), as a result of reinforced feed ban and other control measures. No cases of classical BSE have been detected among cattle born in the five years prior to October 2015.

As of the end of October 2015, only two goats, one in France and the other in the United Kingdom, were reported to be infected with BSE prion among farmed sheep and goats tested retrospectively for BSE. Infection with BSE prion has not been identified in sheep.

The result of the risk assessment is summarized as follows.

Considering the source and route of infection with the BSE agent as well as the finding of only two BSE cases identified after the enforcement of feed regulation, FSCJ concluded that feed regulation is

extremely important in risk management for prevention of BSE in sheep and goats. Also taking into account the risk of infection of sheep and goats, vCJD is highly unlikely to develop through consumption of meat and offal derived from sheep and goats born and raised in the assessed countries, as far as the current risk management including the regulation for feed and others is successively implemented.

Therefore, considering thoroughly available evidence, FSCJ reached the following conclusions on the domestic measures and border measures for sheep and goats born, raised, and slaughtered in the assessed countries.

1) Domestic measures

a) Age limit for BSE testing

A difference between the following two BSE testing measures would be extremely small in the risk to human health. One is the current measure of screening test at slaughterhouses for sheep and goats over 12 months of age. The other is to abolish screening test, but to test for BSE in sheep and goats showing clinical signs at visual inspection.

b) Definition of SRMs and age limit for removal of SRMs

A difference between the following two measures would be extremely small in the risk to human health. One is the current measure of removal of SRMs defined as tonsils, spleen, gut (small intestine and large intestine), and gut-associated lymph nodes of all ages as well as head (excluding tongue, cheek and tonsils), spinal cord and placenta of sheep and goats over 12 months. The other is the head (including tonsil but excluding tongue, cheek and skin) and spinal cord of sheep and goats over 12 months as well as spleen and ileum of all ages.

2) Border measures

A difference between the following two measures for the importation of meat and offal of sheep and goats from BSE countries or regions (i.e. US, Canada, France, Netherlands, Ireland, Poland, Brazil, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and Italy, for which FSCJ has already completed the assessment of import of cattle meat and offal) would be extremely small in the risk to human health. One is the ban on the importation at any age as currently applied to sheep and goats from the above countries. The other is allowing the importation under the condition that SRMs defined as the head (including tonsils but excluding tongue, cheek and skin) and spinal cord at the age of over 12 months as well as the spleen and ileum at all ages of sheep and goats are removed.