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 Brazil

(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 Brazil using reference materials and documents submitted by MHLW regarding the BSE situation in Brazil.

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

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. Until October 2014, a total of 190,654 cases of BSE have been reported worldwide. The annual number of BSE cases peaked at 37,316 in 1992, but decreased remarkably to 21 in 2012, and 7 in 2013, as a result of reinforced feed ban and implementation of other control measures. In recent years, two cases of BSE were identified in Brazil, one in December 2012 and another in May 2014.

The result of the risk assessment is summarized as follows.

As a result of comprehensive implementation of the BSE control measures, only two cases of BSE have been confirmed in Brazil. No BSE cases have been identified in cohorts born after 2002 until November 2014. Taking into account the surveillance data of BSE in the European Union, it is assumed that most BSE infected cattle—approximately 97%—can be detected before the age of 11 years. Therefore, if no BSE cases have been detected among cattle borne in the last 11 years or more, BSE incidence in these birth cohorts is considered to be negligible as in Japan under the continuously implemented countermeasures against BSE, including feed restrictions. In Japan, the effectiveness of the BSE countermeasures is verified through BSE testing at slaughterhouses.

Therefore, considering (1) the current status of BSE in cattle in Brazil, (2) the comprehensive implementation of control measures such as import restriction, feed restriction, and appropriate processing at slaughterhouses, and (3) interspecies barrier between cattle and human in transmission of BSE prion, development of vCJD is highly unlikely to occur through consumption of meat and offal (excluding SRM) imported to Japan from Brazil, under the current control measures.

To reduce further the risks, the import requirements on cattle meat and offal imported from Brazil need to be appropriately established by risk management organizations, based on the current BSE control measures implemented in Japan.

* Definition of SRMs:
Tonsils and distal ileum (two meters from connection to appendix) from cattle of all ages.
Head (excluding the tongue and cheek meat), spinal cord and vertebral column (including dorsal root ganglion but excluding spinous and transverse processes of cervical, thoracic and lumber vertebrae, wings of scrum, the median sacral crest and vertebrae of the tail) from cattle over 30 months of age.