

**HEALTH STATUS WITH REGARD TO BOVINE SPONGIFORM
ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE) AND OTHER TRANSMISSIBLE
SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (TSE)**

Communication from Argentina

The following communication, received on 10 July 2012, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

1. Argentina has been recognized by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) as a negligible BSE-risk country since 2007 and is free from animal TSEs. Neither TSEs in animals nor cases of variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease have ever been diagnosed in Argentina.

The National Programme for the Prevention and Surveillance of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) in Animals encompasses the following strategies:

- Prevention of the entry of TSE agents: Import controls since 1988; registration and monitoring of imported ruminant breeding stock since 1995; and analyses to detect banned ruminant-derived proteins in imported feed since 2001.
- Prevention of agent recycling and amplification: Preventive measures in relation to the production, marketing and transport of animal meat-and-bone meal (MBM); elimination of materials that pose a risk of spreading TSEs (cerebrum, cerebellum and medulla); a ban on feeding ruminants with proteins of animal origin (since 1995); and the mandatory use of a double production line in plants processing feed for both ruminants and non-ruminants. The above-mentioned ban is officially controlled by the National Agriculture and Food Quality and Health Service (SENASA) by means of annual sampling in ruminant feed processing plants and rural smallholdings. Samples are processed in the official SENASA laboratory using microscopy and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) techniques.
- Epidemiological surveillance: This includes both passive surveillance, through the mandatory reporting of cases displaying signs compatible with BSE or scrapie, and active surveillance, through statistical sampling of the categories of animals at greatest risk of developing the diseases. From 1992 to date, more than 45,000 samples from bovine animals have been analysed and tested negative. Argentina also has an OIE Reference Laboratory for the diagnosis of BSE and scrapie, belonging to the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

- Dissemination and ongoing training and education system: Implemented in 1992.

2. In conjunction with SENASA, the Neuropathological Reference Centre for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), which has been operating within the framework of the FLENI Institute since 1983, carries out epidemiological surveillance of human beings for variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease (vCJD) as a differential diagnosis of CJD, given that no cases of vCJD have been diagnosed in Argentina to date.

3. SENASA has thus been implementing, in the context of the National Programme for the Prevention and Surveillance of TSEs in Animals, prevention and surveillance measures for these diseases in Argentina for more than 20 years.

4. The timely adoption, as of 1988, of prevention and surveillance measures by Argentina, in line with the international recommendations of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), have enabled it to remain free of these pathologies, while protecting domestic consumers and remaining well positioned at international level with regard to health and hygiene guarantees for cattle rearing, the food industry and related by-products for use in the biomedical and cosmetics industries, *inter alia*.

5. In this context, as a supplier of meat and meat by-products, Argentina has been and remains subject to assessments by third countries, trade blocs and international organizations and has so far always enjoyed an excellent classification in the most favourable risk category, corresponding to negligible BSE risk, a status which it reviews and substantiates on an annual basis in order to sustain its markets.
