

**ISRAEL'S ANSWERS REGARDING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
(G/SPS/GEN/104)**

The following communication from Israel is being circulated.

We have not been asked to answer points 1 and 2.

Question 3

Israel's import restrictions on live cattle, beef and offal of bovine origin (reflected in notification G/SPS/N/ISR/2) are based upon the OIE International Animal Health Code (IAHC) Chapter 3.2.13 of May 1998 regarding BSE, which divides countries or zones into four categories, of which one category has been defined while the other three are still under study. Israel has defined **six categories** (A-F) to protect its public and animal health, as facilitated in Article 5.7 of the SPS Agreement.

Question 4(a) and (b)

Israel's import restrictions relative to BSE consider the EC member States as "moderate" to "high-risk" countries, as defined by three categories (D-F). Category D includes countries in which no case of BSE has been confirmed, and countries in which exceptional cases have been confirmed but clearly identified as imported. Category E includes countries in which incidence of BSE in indigenous cattle has been recorded but is less than or equal to one per 100,000 head of cattle. Category F includes countries in which more than one case of BSE per 100,000 head of cattle has been confirmed. Additional criteria, cited in Article 3.2.13.1 of the OIE IAHC, have been taken into account in the categorization of the individual countries.

Question 4(c)

Countries exporting live cattle to Israel have been requested to submit a BSE risk analysis in line with the OIE guidelines, in order to be able to better evaluate this categorization. An earlier questionnaire, which has been distributed to a wider range of countries from which Israel imports protein of animal origin, also helped us in this respect. The countries which have submitted a satisfactory risk analysis complying with all the points laid out in the OIE guidelines have, or shall be, notified about their category listing.

Question 4(d)

Category "A" includes countries which are internationally considered to be free from BSE and Scrapie.

Answers to specific questions:

- Under "intensive surveillance" we define a general BSE surveillance and monitoring system with emphasis upon risks identified, in conformity with the guidelines laid down by the OIE IAHC, Appendix 4.5.1.2. The key features are:
 - Banning the local production of mammalian MBMs in rendering plants which produce meals from other animal species, and the feeding of farm animals with MBMs of mammalian origin;
 - Extensive monitoring of the national herd;
 - Regulation and control of the waste handling, waste-disposal and rendering-systems;
 - Conducting a risk analysis.
- Under "long-term surveillance" we understand the application of measures which have been gradually recommended due to their scientific merits and are developed in accordance with the active clinical and pathological surveillance policy followed by Israel since 1991 (see Article 5.4 in Israel's BSE Risk Analysis).
- "Strict import restrictions" comprise measures at least equivalent to those Israel has adopted (summarized in Israel's BSE Risk Analysis), namely:
 - A ban on the importation of MBMs of mammalian origin from all countries since 1990 (see 4(e));
 - Restricted and controlled importation of ruminants and their ova;
 - Restrictions upon the import of pet-food and raw materials for local pet-food production since 1998.

Question 4(e)

A ban on the import and use of mammalian MBM has been restricted to farm animals whose meat may be used for human consumption and not as stated in all animals (see also EC Directive 97/375).

Question 4(f)

Satisfactory surveillance is a non-quantitative term, which applies to the five criteria cited in Article 3.2.13.1 of the OIE IAHC.

Question 4(g)

Israel allows the import of hides and skins from countries with high incidence of BSE.

Question 4(h)

The specific age limits were adopted from the SEAC recommendations.

Ultimately it should be borne in mind that Israel, a beef importing country (no export) obviously does not have any political or commercial interests whatsoever in this issue. The said restrictions were based on purely professional grounds to the best of the understanding and judgment of the Israeli experts.
