

**MEASURES TAKEN BY URUGUAY WITH REGARD TO
BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE)**

Statement by Uruguay at the Meeting Held on 2 and 3 April 2003

Introduction

1. We thank the delegation of Canada for its suggestion, which gives Uruguay an opportunity to provide all Members with information on the issue.
2. As already mentioned at the meeting in November, in the same forum, Uruguay is highly dependent on export opportunities for its livestock products, which account for 8 per cent of Uruguay's gross domestic product and over 50 per cent of foreign currency earnings. If there is one single case of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) in Uruguay, it will not only affect public health but will also be a disaster for the economy.

Protection measures

3. As of 1996, emergency measures were adopted in view of the increasing number of countries affected and the risks that implied for the introduction of the disease into Uruguay, because its aetiology and evolution were unknown, which exacerbates the risk.
4. In 2001, an Executive Decree was drawn up to implement the measures adopted for the import of livestock products and this was communicated to the WTO in due time. The Decree was suspended, in other words it has not been put into effect and its confirmation depends on the bilateral discussions with countries that have presented their analysis of the situation. We must emphasize that in this Decree, and we reiterate that it is not yet in force, there is no list of countries. This is why each situation is examined at the bilateral level.
5. Uruguay is determined to adopt the decisions of the OIE, not only in this area but in all those involving sanitary issues. This is not a passive determination quite the contrary, and we have been working actively, making suggestions and supporting an examination of this chapter in the OIE. We are hoping that the situation will be definitively resolved in May at the OIE's General Assembly.

Situation with Canada

6. Regarding Canada, work is going on at the bilateral level and a good relationship has been established. On 26 November 2002 an analysis of Canada's situation was received through the Canadian embassy. In February 2003, the document from the appropriate sanitary authorities was received and they were requested to provide additional information. When this has been provided, our experts will finalize the study and define the category for Canada.
7. The same procedure was followed with the United States of America, which submitted an analysis of the domestic situation regarding BSE, and this is being examined in order to define the situation of the United States, which should be completed shortly.

8. We wish to reaffirm that Uruguay has no intention of provoking any trade dispute with any of the Members and we are not aware of any difficulties in importing products of animal origin from countries which, for the moment, are included in categories I and II.

Uruguay respects the relevant OIE definitions and is awaiting the decision by the OIE's General Assembly in order to adopt them as a BSE standard.
