

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

6876/90 (Presse 83)

Special Council Meeting  
- Agriculture -  
Brussels, 6 and 7 June 1990

President: Mr Michael O'KENNEDY

Minister for Agriculture  
and Food  
of Ireland

6/7.VI.1990

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul de KEERSMAEKER                      State Secretary for European Affairs  
and Agriculture

Denmark:

Mr Laurits TOERNAES                      Minister for Agriculture

Germany:

Mr Ignaz KIECHLE                      Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture  
and Forestry

Mr Walter KITTEL                      State Secretary,  
Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture  
and Forestry

Mr Werner CHORY                      State Secretary,  
Federal Ministry of Youth, Family Affairs,  
Women and Health

Greece:

Mr Constantinos LYBEROPOULOS              Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Spain:

Mr Fernando MENDEZ                      Chairman of the Fund for the  
Regulation of Agricultural Production  
and Prices (FORPPA)

France:

Mr Henri NALLET                      Minister for Agriculture

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Ireland

Mr Michael O'KENNEDY

Minister for Agriculture and Food

Mr Joe WALSH

Minister of State at the Department  
of Agriculture and Food

Italy:

Mr Paolo BRUNO

State Secretary for Health

Luxembourg:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture and  
Viticulture

Netherlands

Mr Gerrit BRAKS:

Minister for Agriculture,  
Nature Conservation and Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Alvaro dos SANTOS AMARO

State Secretary for Agriculture

United Kingdom:

Mr John GUMMER

Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

Mr David CURRY

Parliamentary Secretary,  
Agriculture

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Commission:

Mr R. MAC SHARRY

Member

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INTRACOMMUNITY TRADE IN BEEF AND BOVINE ANIMALS

A special Council meeting was held at the request of the Commission to examine the situation in intra-Community trade in beef and bovine animals following the measures taken by certain Member States with regard to imports of beef from the United Kingdom because of the presence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy there.

After hearing a statement by the Commission on the findings of the Scientific Veterinary Committee (see Annex) the Council considered what Community measures could be taken to restore the free movement of products in the beef and bovine animal sector.

After lengthy discussion, the Council agreed to adopt the following conclusions:

"1. The Council notes that the Commission, after consultation with the Standing Veterinary Committee, will identify the epidemiological situations requiring the following special measures:

- (i) Certification that bone-in beef for export shall derive from bovines which are not from holdings in which BSE has been confirmed in the previous two years.
- (ii) In the case of boneless beef there must be certification of compliance with paragraph 2 of the opinion of the Scientific Veterinary Committee of 6 June 1990.
- (iii) Exports of live cattle are limited to calves certified to be under 6 months of age and not to be the off-spring of cows in which BSE is

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suspected or confirmed. There must be full use of computer records and proper identification (i.e. freeze brand or tattoo) of animals to guarantee compliance with this point.

As confirmed by the Scientific Veterinary Committee on 6 June 1990, the present epidemiological situation is that these measures are required only in respect of the UK.

2. The Council notes the Commission's intention to further develop all surveillance measures necessary to give effect to the Commission Decision of 6 March 1990 requiring compulsory notification of BSE.
3. The Council notes the United Kingdom's intention to introduce a surveillance mechanism of herds in which BSE has been detected, including inspection in approved slaughterhouses of cattle and carcasses from these herds. The results will be transmitted to the Commission and Member States for evaluation by the Standing Veterinary Committee.
4. The Council notes that the Commission is examining the processes used in the Member States for the manufacture of animal protein for feeding to ruminants in order to ensure that they are in conformity with the requirements of effective animal health protection. In the light of the results of that examination, the Commission will take any necessary steps.
5. The Council invites the Commission to implement a Community-wide programme of research on BSE."

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The measures referred to in point 1(i), (ii) and (iii) were implemented the same day by the Commission, while the Member States which had taken protective measures - France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy - announced that those measures would be withdrawn immediately.

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ANNEX

THE SCIENTIFIC VETERINARY COMMITTEES

Joint Meeting of Animal  
and Public Health Sections  
Brussels 6 June 1990

THE SCIENTIFIC VETERINARY COMMITTEES (ANIMAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH),

Having regard to their opinion of 8 January 1990, concerning the potential risk to human health from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE),

Having regard to new information on this disease which has become available since that date, particularly relating to possible transmission to other species and from cattle to cattle,

Whereas this new information has been examined and the opinion of 8 January reappraised,

Whereas it is considered that no new information has come to light which suggests a need to modify the intention of the opinion, in particular in relation to possible cases in young animals born after the 18 July 1988, which until now have all been diagnosed as negative for BSE,

Whereas, however, it is useful to clarify certain points,

HAVE AMENDED THEIR OPINION OF 8 JANUARY 1990 TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

1. If there is a risk of BSE being transmissible to humans, and this is regarded by the Committee as remote, the following bovine offals are considered to be

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the tissues most likely to present a risk to public health, and should therefore be excluded from the human food chain:

Brain, spinal cord, tonsils, thymus, spleen and intestines produced from bovine animals over the age of six months.

Taking account of the epidemiological situation in the Community, these measures are considered to be necessary at present only in the United Kingdom. However, the situation should be reviewed regularly in the light of developments of the disease situation in Member States.

2. In the light of present knowledge, meat derived from bovine animals in countries in which BSE occurs is not considered to be a danger to public health. Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure, every attempt must be made during the cutting process to remove obvious nervous and lymphatic tissues from products to be supplied to the consumer. These tissues, where removed, must not be put into products for human consumption.
3. When there is a clinical suspicion of a case of BSE, the brain of that animal must be examined for diagnostic purposes and the remainder of the carcass destroyed if BSE is subsequently confirmed.

This opinion was adopted unanimously.