





[Homepage](#) > [Animal health & welfare](#) > **[Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy - Homepage](#)**

## BSE: Homepage

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), sometimes known as "mad cow" disease, is a disease of cattle first identified in 1986. This site is an authoritative source of information on BSE provided by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a UK Government department.

### Latest developments

#### Review of the Over Thirty Month Rule

The Food Standards Agency has recently completed a review of the UK's Over Thirty Month rule and have advised Ministers that it would be acceptable on health grounds to replace the rule with BSE testing of OTM cattle born after July 1996. Defra, partner organisations and key industry stakeholders are currently putting in place arrangements to facilitate the high-volume, high speed testing which will be needed to implement any change.

#### BSE Risk Status - Progress made in the UK.

A crucial determining factor for the UK achieving 'moderate', BSE risk status, is the ability to accurately demonstrate that the country's BSE incidence rate has fallen below the recently amended OIE limit of 200 cases per million within the cattle population aged over 24 months calculated over a 12 month period. Further information<sup>[PDF]</sup> is available on this website.

A summary of the chronology<sup>[PDF]</sup> of BSE in the UK is available.

#### The BSE site is divided into seven main subject areas:

- Public Health** The controls put in place by the Government for the protection of consumers from BSE, and to ensure that the meat people eat is safe.
- Eradication** The measures taken to eradicate BSE and protect animal health.
- Beef industry** The action taken by the Government to assist the beef industry and maintain the beef supply chain.
- Europe** The effects of BSE in the rest of Europe and Europe's response.
- Science** The nature of BSE and similar diseases, scientific research and the work of SEAC.
- Statistics** A range of statistics related to BSE and similar diseases.
- Publications** General DEFRA publications on BSE and similar diseases.

The BSE Inquiry<sup>[WWW]</sup> has a dedicated website, although the Government's 'Response to the Report of the BSE Inquiry'<sup>[PDF] [478Kb]</sup> is available on this website. Additionally, the Government's 'Interim Response'<sup>[PDF] [366Kb]</sup> is also available.

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[\[Beef industry\]](#) [\[Eradication\]](#) [\[Europe\]](#) [\[Publications\]](#) [\[Public health\]](#) [\[Science\]](#) [\[Statistics\]](#)

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Page published: 03 September 2003

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