

**REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP
ON BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY RISK STATUS EVALUATION
OF MEMBERS
28 and 29 September 2020**

A virtual meeting of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk status evaluation of Members (hereafter the Group) was held from 28 to 29 September 2020.

1. Opening

On behalf of Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE, Dr Matthew Stone, OIE Deputy Director General for International Standards and Science, welcomed and thanked the Group for its commitment and the extensive support towards the OIE mandates. He acknowledged the amount of work achieved before, during and after the *ad hoc* Group meeting and the efforts required in reviewing the dossiers while highlighting that the official recognition of disease status was an important activity for the OIE.

Dr Stone reminded the Group on the significance and confidentiality of the dossiers received for official recognition and thanked the experts for having signed the forms for undertaking of confidentiality. He underlined the OIE procedures for protecting the confidentiality of information and for declaring potential conflicts of interest (by withdrawing themselves from the discussion/conclusion in case of a potential conflict of interest).

Dr Stone pointed out that whilst the evaluation of the BSE risk status of Members might be a politically sensitive issue, the Group's assessment should be driven by standards, science and evidence-based. He highlighted that the ongoing revision of the BSE Chapter should not impact the evaluation of the dossiers received by the Group. Dr Stone also encouraged the Group to capture the rationale supporting its decisions and recommendations in its meeting report for the consideration of Members.

The Group and the OIE welcomed Drs Andrea Marcos and John Griffin as new members of the Group.

2. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of chairperson and rapporteur

Dr Noel Murray was appointed Chair and Dr Lesley van Helden acted as rapporteur with the support of the OIE Secretariat. The Group endorsed the proposed agenda.

The terms of reference, agenda and list of participants are provided as [Appendices I, II and III](#), respectively.

3. Evaluation of applications from Members for the official recognition of their negligible BSE risk status

3.1. Canada

In accordance with the established procedures, the participating expert working for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) from Canada expressed a possible conflict of interest and withdrew from the decision making on Canada's dossier.

Canada was recognised as having a controlled risk status for BSE in May 2007. In July 2020, Canada submitted a dossier seeking its recognition as a country presenting a negligible BSE risk status. The Group requested additional information and received clarification from Canada. Points specifically discussed by the Group are summarised below:

a) Section 1: Risk Assessment — Article 11.4.2. point 1

- Risk assessment for entry of the BSE agent

With respect to importation of live cattle, the Group noted that imports into Canada during the last eight years were from a single country with negligible BSE risk status.

The Group noted that commodities such as dicalcium phosphate with traces of protein and fat, and gelatine and collagen made from bovine bones were imported by Canada in accordance with the relevant articles of Chapter 11.4.

Concerning imports of products of bovine origin, the Group noted that a variety of products of bovine origin such as meat and meat products for human consumption, and products used in the manufacture of veterinary biologicals were imported from countries with a controlled or a negligible BSE risk status, and that import conditions required the absence of specified risk material (SRM), including all tissues listed in Article 11.4.14.

Regarding importation of meat-and-bone meal (MBM), greaves or feed ingredients containing either in the last eight years, the Group took note that Canada imported ruminant MBM only from countries posing a negligible BSE risk. The Group calculated that 95% of the pet food and treats containing ruminant MBM that were imported into Canada came from countries with a negligible BSE risk status, while the rest either came from countries with a controlled BSE risk status or from one country posing an undetermined BSE risk. The Group agreed that the likelihood that the BSE agent could have entered Canada via these commodities was negligible given that these commodities were (1) imported from three countries that currently hold a controlled BSE risk status only due to the occurrence of an indigenous case of classical BSE younger than 11 years, (2) manufactured in a country with an undetermined BSE risk, but at CFIA-approved pet food manufacturing facilities which demonstrated that any cattle by-products used as ingredients were exclusively derived from animals from two countries with a negligible BSE risk status, and (3) pre-packaged ready for retail sale or in bulk.

After discussion of the entry assessment, the Group concluded that the risk that the BSE agent could have entered Canada during the interval covered by the assessment was negligible.

- Risk of recycling and amplification of the BSE agent, and appropriate level of control and audit of the feed ban

The Group acknowledged that legislation prohibiting feeding ruminants with most mammalian-derived proteins has been in force since 1997¹, and that significant enhancements were implemented in 2007 to exclude SRM from the entire terrestrial and aquatic animal feed chains as well as pet food and fertilizer.

The Group noted that since 2007 SRM has been specifically identified, segregated at source and redirected for disposal or destruction under a series of annual permits issued by CFIA to ensure that rendered materials used in the production of animal feed do not contain or are not contaminated with SRM. The Group observed that the Health of Animals Regulations defined SRM as the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia, eyes, tonsils, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia of

¹ Health of Animals Regulations, Section 162. Protein derived exclusively from porcine or equine animals as well as milk, milk products, blood, blood products, gelatine and its products derived exclusively from hides or skins, are exempt and may be fed to all species, including ruminants. Rendered fats derived from ruminants that contain no more than 0.15% insoluble impurities are also exempt. A 'prohibited material' is hence defined as anything that is, or that contains any, mammalian protein other than the ones mentioned above.

cattle aged 30 months or older, and the distal ileum of cattle of all ages. Whereas the Group noted that this list was not fully consistent with the materials listed in Article 11.4.14 of the *Terrestrial Code* (i.e., tonsils of animals under 30 months of age not considered SRM in Canada), tonsils were still classified as prohibited material under Canada's 1997 feed ban and were not incorporated into feed for ruminants.

The Group noted that 99% of the cattle were slaughtered at facilities under government jurisdiction, where cattle were subjected to ante- and post-mortem inspections. The remainder were on-farm emergency slaughter or were slaughtered for personal use by farmers. Inedible waste derived from cattle (including condemned animals and fallen stock) was classified either as SRM or non-SRM (or prohibited materials). SRM was excluded from the entire animal feed chain and fertilizers, whereas non-SRM was banned from being fed to ruminants. Whenever SRM was not segregated from other prohibited waste materials, all the waste was classified as SRM.

The Group took note that SRM was mainly disposed of by burial in landfills or by incineration, but could also be composted for non-agricultural purposes or subjected to alkaline or thermal hydrolyses. The Group noted that rendering was not fully consistent with the parameters stated in Article 11.4.19. of the *Terrestrial Code* for the reduction of BSE infectivity, and that neither the rendering process nor the parameters employed were regulated under Canada's feed ban. However, the Group noted that composting and partial rendering were used as intermediate steps to reduce the volume of material before final disposal, and SRM was only rendered in four plants either exclusively dedicated for that purpose or with dedicated production lines.

With regard to rendering plants, from the information from 2012 to 2019 provided in tables, the Group acknowledged that there were between six and eight plants handling material of ruminant and mixed-species origin, and between 24 and 26 plants handling only material of non-ruminant origin. The Group also noted that sampling to test for the presence of ruminant material in rendering plants processing only material of non-ruminant origin was not undertaken in Canada, and that 100% of the plants were inspected at least once a year under competent authority supervision.

The Group noted that whereas imported or nationally produced MBM could be used for pet food or feed for other non-ruminant species, such as pigs and poultry, ruminant MBM was prohibited to be incorporated into ruminant feed. The Group noted that the majority of feed mills making ruminant feed did not handle prohibited materials. Over the last 8 years, an average of 25 feed mills (representing 6% of the commercial feed mills) were producing feed for both ruminants and non-ruminants, and used material prohibited by the feed ban as an ingredient in non-ruminant feed each year. Of these, 13 mills did so consistently from year to year. The Group took note that feed mills that handled prohibited material and manufactured ruminant feed on the same premises either used sequencing, flushing or physical cleanout to avoid cross-contamination. The Group observed that sampling to test for the presence of ruminant material was not undertaken in Canada but acknowledged that about 92% of these feed mills were subjected to comprehensive inspection by CFIA each year. The Group noted that the control of the proper implementation of the feed ban focused on a series of inspections involving onsite assessments of a number of feed ban related tasks at all points along the feed production and distribution chain from rendering facilities, to feed mills, to retailers and livestock producers.

Overall, regarding the exposure assessment, the Group concluded that the risk of recycling and amplification of the BSE agent if it was present in Canada's cattle population during the interval covered by the assessment could be considered to be negligible.

b) Surveillance according to Articles 11.4.20. - 11.4.22.

As a country currently holding a controlled BSE risk status, Canada carried out Type A surveillance, for which the target point was met in 2005. The Group noted that Canada has nonetheless continued to undertake Type A surveillance. The surveillance undertaken over the seven-year period from 2013 to 2019 exceeded the minimum requirements of type B surveillance according to Article 11.4.22. on surveillance for BSE in the *Terrestrial Code*. Based on the additional information, 1,068,919 surveillance points were collected from 2013 to 2019, compared to a minimum requirement of 150,000 for an adult cattle population between 4.7 and 6.4 million over two years of age.

The Group took note that, since 2009, Canada's surveillance programme for BSE was not stratified by subpopulation into clinical suspects, casualty slaughter, and fallen stock, but rather by age category only and merged into a single subpopulation referred to as a 'risk subpopulation'. Routine slaughter was not targeted for BSE surveillance. The Group considered that Canada's criteria to assign animals to a single risk subpopulation was consistent with Chapter 11.4. and that Canada's approach has proven to be equivalent to the provisions of Article 11.4.21. of the *Terrestrial Code*. Acknowledging that animals in the risk subpopulations were targeted for testing, the Group recommended that records on number of potential BSE candidates for surveillance that were reported to the competent authorities be kept to provide evidence that all animals with clinical signs compatible with BSE were investigated.

The Group acknowledged that the age of cattle was verified through birth date records or a dental examination. Identification information, including birth date, farm of origin and unique identification number, has been available nationally through two national mandatory electronic animal identification systems since 2001. Dentition was used for estimation of age only if necessary.

The Group considered that the samples taken for BSE surveillance were representative of the distribution of cattle in Canada given the differences in demographics of the beef and dairy sectors.

c) Other requirements — Article 11.4.2. points 2–4

▪ Awareness programme

The Group noted that an awareness programme on BSE was initiated in 1990, and that it has continued to be enhanced over the years. The Group noted that the programme was available to all relevant stakeholders, continuously applied and covered the entire country.

The Group acknowledged that a BSE Hazard Specific Plan outlined the details of Canada's response should a case of BSE arise.

▪ Compulsory notification and investigation

The Group noted that BSE was made a reportable disease throughout the country under relevant legislation in 1990 (Health of Animals Act), which made it compulsory to notify the federal government of any suspect BSE cases. The Group noted that penalties related to lack of reporting were specified, as well as reimbursements and compensations when BSE surveillance samples were collected. The Group concluded that the system for compulsory notification and investigation met the requirements of the *Terrestrial Code*.

▪ Laboratory examination

The Group noted that within the last seven years BSE diagnosis was conducted at the CFIA's national BSE reference laboratory in Lethbridge, Alberta (which is an OIE reference laboratory for BSE) and at the National TSE Laboratory Network (made of five laboratories approved to conduct BSE surveillance testing under the oversight of the national BSE reference laboratory).

The Group was informed that since 2005 two rapid tests were used as primary test and that samples with a positive or inconclusive result would be referred to the national BSE reference laboratory in Lethbridge for confirmatory testing with western blotting or immunohistochemistry.

The Group concluded that the laboratory examination for BSE carried out in Canada was compliant with Chapter 3.4.5. the *Terrestrial Manual*.

d) BSE history in the country

There have been 21 cases of BSE reported in Canada. Of these, one case of BSE was born in the UK in 1986, exported to Canada in 1987 and diagnosed in 1993. Of the remaining 20 cases, which were all born in Canada, two were atypical (an H-type born around 1990 and an L-type born in 1994) and the rest were classical.

At the time of writing this report, the youngest indigenous case of classical BSE was born on 25 March 2009, meaning that all indigenous cases of classical BSE would have been born more than 11 years before the World Assembly in May 2021.

All BSE cases have been destroyed by incineration in Canada. Cohort animals associated with each BSE case were humanely euthanized and destroyed by incineration or disposed of by burial in an SRM-permitted landfill.

e) Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.8.

The Group appreciated the well-structured and comprehensive dossier provided by Canada and agreed that the dossier submitted was compliant with the format of the questionnaire of Chapter 1.8. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

f) Conclusion

- Recommended status

Considering the information submitted in the dossier and Canada's answers to the questions raised, the Group concluded that the application was compliant with the requirements of Article 11.4.3. and with the BSE questionnaire in Chapter 1.8. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The Group therefore recommended that Canada be recognised as a 'negligible BSE risk' country.

3.2. Ireland

In accordance with the established procedures, the participating expert previously working for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in Ireland expressed a possible conflict of interest and withdrew from the decision making on Ireland's dossier.

Ireland was recognised as having a controlled BSE risk status in May 2008 and was later recognised as having a negligible BSE risk status in May 2015. After an indigenous case of classical BSE in a five-year-old bovine was reported to the OIE in June 2015, a controlled BSE risk status was reinstated.

In July 2020, Ireland submitted a dossier seeking its recognition as a country presenting a negligible BSE risk status.

The Group requested additional information and received clarification from Ireland. Points specifically discussed by the Group are summarised below:

a) Section 1: Risk Assessment — Article 11.4.2. point 1

- Risk assessment for entry of the BSE agent

Regarding importations of live cattle, the Group noted that in the past eight years all cattle were imported from countries with a controlled or negligible BSE risk status in compliance with Articles 11.4.7 and 11.4.8 of the *Terrestrial Code*.

The Group noted that Ireland's dossier provided details on a wide variety of imported products of bovine origin and that these would have been produced according to EU standards, which are in accordance with the requirements at least as strict as those of the *Terrestrial Code*. The Group acknowledged, from the additional information provided, that importation of tallow and tallow derivatives into Ireland was consistent with Articles 11.4.16 or 11.4.18 of the *Terrestrial Code*.

With respect to importations of meat and bone meal (MBM), greaves and feed containing either, the Group acknowledged that from 2012 to 2019 all importations of pre-packaged pet food containing processed animal protein (PAP) of ruminant origin came from countries with a negligible BSE risk status. The Group also noted that importations of ruminant MBM during the same period came from countries or zones with a controlled BSE risk status. However, this MBM was derived from Category 3² material as defined under EU Regulations, i.e. material from healthy slaughtered animals which are deemed fit for human consumption having passed ante and post-mortem inspection but does not go for human consumption. As a result, it posed a negligible BSE risk and was destined for the manufacture of pet food.

Based on the information above, the Group concluded that the risk that the BSE agent could have entered Ireland during the interval covered by the assessment was considered to be negligible.

- Risk of recycling and amplification of the BSE agent, and appropriate level of control and audit of the feed ban

The Group noted that Ireland has had an official feed ban in place since 1990 that was progressively enhanced over the years. A ban on feeding all farmed animals with MBM or tallow derived from Category 1 and 2 materials, as well as PAP derived from Category 3 material from both ruminants and non-ruminants ('total feed ban') was implemented in the EU, including Ireland, in 2001.

The Group observed that in Ireland most fallen stock were collected by approved hauliers on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). In exceptional instances (i.e., remote areas) a licence may be given for burial on-farm. Following collection, fallen stock were either transported directly to a Category 1 rendering plant, or indirectly via a DAFM-approved knackery. The Group took note that Category 1 material was processed under conditions that were equivalent to Article 11.4.19 of the *Terrestrial Code* before being exported for incineration. The Group noted that carcasses of fallen stock testing positive for BSE were directly sent for incineration without being directed to a Category 1 rendering plant.

The Group took note that the definition, collection and disposal of SRM followed the recommendations of the *Terrestrial Code* and the European Union regulations (EC) No 999/2001 and No 1069/2009. The Group noted that SRM could be removed in approved knackeries and slaughterhouses only and, in some instances, butcher shops which were authorised to remove vertebral columns of cattle older than 30 months. Following collection, SRM must be disposed of as Category 1 material and rendered under conditions equivalent to those of Article 11.4.19 before transport for incineration. The Group acknowledged the detailed information provided by Ireland on inspections and audits implemented by DAFM monitoring the correct implementation of SRM regulations.

² Ireland categorises animal-by products into three categories as per EU Regulations: Category 1 (SRM and other high-risk materials), Category 2 (fallen stock that do not contain SRM) and Category 3 (material from healthy slaughtered animals which are deemed fit for human consumption having passed ante and post-mortem inspection but that do not go for human consumption).

With regards to the rendering industry, the Group noted that ten plants had been operating in Ireland since 2012, eight of which processed material of ruminant and mixed-species origin, and two dealt with non-ruminant material. Six of these plants processed Category 3 material (fish meal and oil, PAP and Category 3 tallow) and four processed Category 1 material (clinical waste, Category 1 MBM and tallow). The Group took note that weekly visual inspections and biannual official inspections by DAFM staff took place to ensure compliance. Reported infractions were dealt with effectively, and none raised concerns related to BSE.

Regarding ruminant feed production in Ireland, the Group observed that the feed consisted up to 80% of grass, hay and silage with the balance supplied as compound feed mixed on farm or manufactured in feed mills. Between 2012 and 2019 there were between 75 and 99 feed mills operating each year; in 2019, 77% of feed mills in Ireland were processing both ruminant and non-ruminant feed. The Group noted that feed mills processing animal proteins such as fishmeal were not allowed to produce ruminant feed on the same premises. The Group noted that an extensive inspection and sampling program was implemented at import, mill, retailer and farm levels to prevent cross-contamination and ensure compliance with the total feed ban, with feed mills producing feed for both ruminants and non-ruminants being inspected more frequently. Samples were collected from each mill annually to verify compliance with the feed ban by checking for cross-contamination using microscopy. The Group noted that the non-compliances that were reported were rare and not relevant for the risk of cross-contamination of ruminant feed with the BSE agent.

The Group further noted that pet food manufacturers processing animal protein (PAP) derived from Category 3 cattle material operated as standalone plants independent of any feed mill manufacturing feed for farmed animals.

Overall, regarding the exposure assessment, the Group concluded that the risk of recycling and amplification of the BSE agent if it was present in Ireland's cattle population during the interval covered by the assessment could be considered to be negligible.

b) Surveillance according to Articles 11.4.20.-11.4.22.

The Group noted that the surveillance undertaken over a seven-year period from 2013 to 2019 exceeded the minimum requirements of type B surveillance according to Article 11.4.22. on surveillance for BSE in the *Terrestrial Code*. Based on the information provided in the dossier and in the additional information 245,929 surveillance points were collected from 2013 to 2019, compared to a minimum requirement of 150,000 for an adult cattle population (i.e., over two years of age) between 2.6 and 2.7 million.

The Group acknowledged that cattle age was determined based on individual identity tags and passports in conjunction with the Animal Movement Identification database. Each individual bovine had a unique identification displayed on two ear tags which were registered within 20 days after birth.

With regards to the definition of clinical suspects, the Group agreed that even though Ireland's definition did not include an age limit (i.e., all cattle displaying signs consistent with BSE were to be tested), and that the minimum age for fallen stock and casualty slaughter was fixed at 48 months, the Group considered that Ireland's definitions of surveillance subpopulations were in accordance with Article 11.4.21 of the *Terrestrial Code*.

The Group took note that Ireland's surveillance programme for BSE targeted all four surveillance subpopulations every year until 2013, when sampling of routinely slaughtered cattle was discontinued. A total of 93 clinical suspects was reported in Ireland between 2013 and 2019.

c) **Other requirements — Article 11.4.2, points 2–4**

▪ Awareness programme

The Group noted that awareness activities for BSE were initiated in 1989 following Ireland's first case of BSE and progressively expanded through the early 1990s to cover the entire country and all relevant stakeholders. A schedule of formal training workshops was provided by Ireland showing that the target audience of the program was comprehensive: farmers, animal handlers, slaughterhouse workers, private and government veterinarians, and DAFM staff based in slaughterhouses and meat processing plants. The Group observed that Ireland provided detailed documentation on the types of training activities carried out with presentations, pamphlets and leaflets being provided. In addition, detailed information on BSE surveillance and control measures, the exclusion of SRM from the human and animal feed chains, preventing access to MBM by all ruminant animals and a series of videos on the clinical signs of BSE were available on the DAFM website.

The Group concluded that, based on the information provided, Ireland's awareness programme met the requirements of the *Terrestrial Code*.

In addition, the Group noted that Ireland had a comprehensive BSE contingency plan in place should a case of BSE arise. This program was last updated in 2020.

▪ Compulsory notification and investigation

The Group noted that BSE was declared a notifiable disease under relevant legislation since 1989 (S.I. No 61 of 1989 (Diseases of Animals Act (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy)) Order 1989). The Group acknowledged that this Act made it compulsory for the owner of an animal or anyone who inspects or examines an animal in the course of their duties to notify suspicion of BSE to DAFM. The Group acknowledged that compensation at market value was provided to farmers for animals killed as part of a BSE investigation, and that penalties were in place for failure to report BSE cases. The Group therefore concluded that the system for compulsory notification and investigation met the requirements of the *Terrestrial Code*.

▪ Laboratory examination

The Group observed that all diagnostic testing was undertaken in Ireland. The Central Veterinary Research Laboratory (CVRL) at Backweston (in Ireland) was listed as Ireland's National Reference Laboratory (NRL) for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) under the EU TSE Regulation. In addition to the CVRL, there were five Rapid Testing Laboratories (RTL) approved and monitored by the CVRL that used EU-approved rapid tests.

For clinical suspects, the NRL used immunohistochemistry (together with histopathology) or western blotting as the primary test of the brain, while the RTL tested the obex with a rapid test. For fallen stock and casualty slaughter, rapid testing was used as the primary test. Secondary testing of inconclusive or positive samples was done with immunohistochemistry (together with histopathology) or western blotting.

The Group noted that the laboratories participated in proficiency trials organised by the EU's Community Reference Laboratory (EURL) for TSEs and that all confirmatory and discriminatory tests were accredited to ISO-17025.

The Group concluded that the laboratory examination for BSE carried out in Ireland was compliant with Chapter 3.4.5 of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

d) BSE history in the country

The Group noted that BSE was first reported in Ireland in 1989 with the last case occurring in 2015 in an animal born in 2010. To date, a total of 1,656 classical BSE cases and six atypical BSE cases were detected in Ireland. Legislation for BSE and associated control measures and surveillance mirror those implemented within the EU.

At the time of writing this report, the youngest indigenous case of classical BSE was born on 14 January 2010, meaning that all the detected cases would have been born more than 11 years before the World Assembly in May 2021.

e) Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.8.

The Group appreciated the well-structured and comprehensive dossier provided by Ireland and agreed that the dossier submitted was compliant with the format of the questionnaire of Chapter 1.8. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

f) Conclusion

Considering the information submitted in the dossier and Ireland's answers to follow-up questions raised, the Group concluded that the application was compliant with both the requirements of Article 11.4.3. and the BSE questionnaire in Chapter 1.8. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The Group therefore recommended that Ireland be recognised as a 'negligible BSE risk' country.

4. Finalisation and adoption of the draft report

The Group reviewed and amended the draft report. The Group agreed that the report reflected the discussions.

.../Appendices

Appendix I

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP
ON BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY RISK STATUS EVALUATION OF MEMBERS
28 and 29 September 2020**

Terms of reference

Purpose

The purpose of the *ad hoc* Group on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk status of Members is to evaluate applications for official recognitions of BSE risk status.

Background

In accordance with the [OIE procedure for official recognition of disease status](#), OIE Members can be officially recognised as having a negligible or controlled bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk status by the OIE through the adoption of a resolution by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE at the General Session in May every year. A Member wishing to be officially recognised as having a BSE risk status by the OIE should submit the [questionnaire](#) laid out in Chapter 1.8 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* and comply with all requirements specified in the *Terrestrial Code* for BSE. The OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases ([Scientific Commission](#)) is responsible for undertaking, on behalf of the Assembly, the assessment of OIE Members' applications for their compliance with OIE standards. The assessment carried out by the Scientific Commission is based on the recommendations formulated by a relevant *ad hoc* Group. *Ad hoc* groups are convened under the authority of and report to the OIE Director General.

Specific issues to be addressed

The Group will screen and evaluate in detail two applications from Members to assess whether the Member complies with the requirements specified for BSE in the *Terrestrial Code*. Based on that evaluation, the Group will provide a recommendation to the Scientific Commission.

Prerequisites

Ad hoc Group members should:

- Sign the OIE Undertaking on Confidentiality of information (if not done already);
- Complete the Declaration of Interest Form;
- Understand that the membership of the Group may be retained between *ad hoc* group meetings to ensure continuity of the work.

Actions to deliverBefore the meeting

Upon reception of an application from a Member, the Status Department (SD) conducts a preliminary screening to check the conformity of the dossier (structure of the dossier in accordance with the SOP and with the relevant questionnaire, main sections of the questionnaire, regular notification to the OIE, payment of the fee, PVS report, etc.). If an information gap is identified, the SD requests additional information to the Member.

As the OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) reports are bound by the OIE rules on confidentiality of information, the SD and experts will consider for the evaluation the available PVS reports if not obsolete or confidential.

The SD will send the working documents to the *ad hoc* Group, including the dossiers received from applicants, at least one month before the Group meeting (i.e., **29 August 2020**).

The experts can request support from the SD at any time.

The SD suggests the nomination of a Chair and Rapporteur for the Group's consideration.

The experts are expected to:

- Be familiar with Chapters [1.8](#) and [11.4](#) of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Evaluate and study in detail all dossiers provided by the OIE;
- Take into account any other information available in the public domain that is considered pertinent for the evaluation of the dossiers;
- Summarise the dossiers according to Chapter 1.8 requirements by completing the summary tables provided by the SD (form provided in Appendix A);
- Draft questions to the applicant Members whenever the evaluation of the dossiers identifies incomplete or unclear information;
- Submit to the SD the completed summary tables for each application together with possible questions at least 10 days before the teleconference (i.e., **18 September 2020**);

The SD will compile the summary tables and the questions to be forwarded to the applicant Members before the teleconference. The SD will forward to experts all subsequent information and material provided by a Member.

During the meeting

- Agree on the appointment of the Chair and Rapporteur of the meeting (the Chair will lead the discussion and the Rapporteur will ensure that the report reflects the discussion and captures the detailed assessment of the dossiers);
- Mention any potential conflict of interest and, if relevant, withdraw him/herself from the discussion;
- Contribute to the discussions;
- Contribute to drafting the report.

If during the teleconference the Group decides that additional information should be requested to the applicant Members before an informed conclusion can be drawn, the SD forwards the additional information to the Group at a later date. The Chair is responsible for coordinating the finalisation of the assessment and for ensuring that the views of all Group members are taken into consideration.

Should the Group not be able to complete its Terms of Reference during this meeting, experts' contributions will be solicited after the meeting, including by teleconference if needed.

After the meeting

The SD will circulate the draft report after the teleconference is over. Experts are expected to contribute to the finalisation of the report within the following week.

The SD will circulate the final version of the report to the Group once endorsed by the Scientific Commission and is published online.

Deliverables

Detailed report to recommend to the Scientific Commission whether the Member should be (or not be) recognised with an official BSE risk status. The report should indicate any information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future by the Member.

Reporting / timeline

The OIE will circulate the draft report no more than seven days after the teleconference (no later than 9 October 2020) and the Group will finalise its report within the following week (indicative deadline: 16 October 2020).

Appendix II

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP
ON BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY RISK STATUS EVALUATION
OF MEMBERS
28 and 29 September 2020**

Agenda

1. Opening.
 2. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of Chair and Rapporteur.
 3. Evaluation of applications from Members for official recognition of BSE negligible risk status
 - 3.1. Canada
 - 3.2. Ireland
 4. Finalisation and adoption of the report.
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Appendix III

OIE AD HOC GROUP
ON BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY RISK STATUS EVALUATION
OF MEMBERS
28 and 29 September 2020

List of participants

MEMBERS

Dr John M. Griffin
 Senior Superintending Veterinary
 Inspector
 Department of Agriculture
 Kildare
 IRELAND

Dr Andrea Marcos
 Coordinadora General
 Coordinación de Epidemiología
 Dirección de Planificación y Estrategia de Sanidad
 Animal
 Dirección Nacional de Sanidad Animal
 Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad
 Agroalimentaria
 Buenos Aires
 ARGENTINA

Dr Noel Murray
 Senior Advisor on Risk Analysis
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency
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 CANADA

Dr Mark Stevenson
 Professor of Veterinary Epidemiology
 The University of Melbourne
 Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural
 Sciences
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 AUSTRALIA

Dr Jennifer Saurina
 (Invited, but could not attend)
 Advisor
 International Affairs
 Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA)
 Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)
 Bern
 SWITZERLAND

Dr Lesley van Helden
 State Veterinarian – Epidemiology
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 Department of Agriculture
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Representatives from the Specialist Commissions

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