

## L.4.- TSE Legislation in the EU: aspects in food

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On 22 May 2001, the European Parliament and Council adopted Regulation (EC) 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, which is known as the 'TSE Regulation'. This Regulation is applicable as of 1 July 2001.

The TSE Regulation provides measures targeting all animal and public health risks resulting from all animal TSE, and governing the entire chain of production and placing on the market of live animals and products of animal origin. It consolidated much of the existing legislation on BSE or TSE, including rules for the monitoring of TSE in bovine, ovine and caprine animals, removal of specified risk material and prohibitions concerning animal feeding. It also introduced new legislation for areas which are not yet covered by European Union (EU) rules such as eradication of TSE and trade rules covering the domestic market, intra-community trade, import and export. Furthermore it provides for the procedure, criteria and categories for the classification of countries according to BSE status. Pending the final categorisation of countries according to their BSE risk, transitional measures apply until 1 July 2005.

The removal of the specified risk material is the most important measure to protect the health of the consumers against the risk related to BSE. Specified risk materials (SRM) are defined as the animal tissues being most at risk of harbouring the TSE agent. By way of precaution, these tissues must be removed from the food and feed chains to avoid the risk of recycling the TSE agent. They are separately collected at slaughterhouses and disposed of by direct incineration or after pre processing. The Commission keeps SRM measures under regular review and has requested on a number of occasions scientific advice on the appropriate measures to be taken in relation to TSE risk in cattle and sheep.

The TSE Regulation also establishes the rules for the surveillance and the monitoring of TSE in bovine, ovine and caprine animals. These rules include two elements: a passive surveillance in animals with clinical symptoms compatible with BSE and an active surveillance (monitoring), which was introduced in 2001 at EU level and is based on the use of rapid post mortem tests.

The main purpose of the monitoring programme is to provide a reliable insight into the prevalence of BSE in the Member States. At the same time it also ensures that no BSE cases are being slaughtered for human consumption. This increases beef safety in combination with other measures such as the removal and destruction of specified risk materials. The compilation of Member State data is important to enhance the understanding of the epidemiology of TSEs and allows us to better identify the future direction policies which should be taken to protect animal and human health.

### **Keywords :**

*TSE regulation, SRM, BSE risk*