

To: District Council Chief EHOs  
Group Chief EHOs  
NIFLG Members

CC: LACORS  
CIEH

ENF/NI/08/24

7<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Dear Colleague

**THE TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (AMENDMENT)  
REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2008**

Further to my letter of 25 April I am writing to clarify one or two points in the light of queries we have received and to ask you to write to all butchers in your jurisdiction that were not previously authorised to remove bovine vertebral column (VC) to advise them that the law has now changed and that they can now handle and sell meat from under 30 month bovines containing VC.

The transitional arrangements set out in my earlier letter will apply in previously authorised butchers premises **until 31 May**. This means that carcase meat from bovines slaughtered prior to rule change on 26 April must have the VC removed by 31 May if it is to be sold to the public. If this meat has not had the VC removed by then it must be treated as a category 1 Animal by product and be stained and disposed of; **it must not be sold for human or pet food** .

Once the transitional period is over District Councils will continue to have enforcement responsibilities in relation to the TSE Regulations at butchers premises and indeed at other food premises not under DARD enforcement. Although there will no longer be any need to authorise butchers, during their normal visits to butchers and other food



premises enforcement officers should keep a look out for specified risk material (SRM) or meat containing SRM . This will only be present illegally and may be indicative of illegal slaughter practices so some enforcement action may be appropriate.

There remains a requirement for all meat derived from bovine animals under 30 months of age at slaughter containing VC to be clearly marked with a blue stripe on the label at the slaughterhouse. All bone-in bovine meat arriving at a butcher **should** therefore have a blue stripe on the label. If such meat arrives at a butcher with no label or with a label without a blue stripe, it should be returned to the despatching plant. It should not be sold or have the VC removed by the butcher. In addition, although butchers cannot remove VC from OTM carcasses the commercial documents must identify the number of carcasses or part carcasses in the consignment from which the vertebral column is or is not required to be removed. Butchers are required to keep the commercial documents for 12 months.

I attach a copy of the letter that I suggest is sent to all butchers that were not authorised to remove SRM VC.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Gamble on 028 90417705 or email at [Danielle.gamble@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.gamble@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. A. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

**Jim Ross**

**Meat Hygiene & Imported Food Unit**