

Dear Sir/Madam

**THE TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (AMENDMENT)  
REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2008 – CHANGES IN SRM CONTROLS**

In May 2006 the rules on specified risk material (SRM) were changed and the vertebral column (VC) from all bovines aged over 24 months at slaughter became SRM. This meant that only butchers who were specifically authorised to remove VC could handle and sell bone in meat from cattle 24-30 months of age.

You will be pleased to learn that from 26 April the rules have changed and the age limit for classifying bovine VC as SRM is once again 30 months.

This means that it is no longer necessary to obtain an authorisation to handle bone in carcasses between 24 and 30 months of age, nor does the VC from these carcasses have to be removed prior to sale and be disposed of as a category 1 animal by-product. All butchers can now handle this material. **However only authorised butchers can receive 24 – 30 month old bone in carcasses that were slaughtered prior to the rule change on 26 April.**

There is 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 your premises **should** therefore have a blue stripe on the label. If such meat arrives without a 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 at your premises.

In addition, although you cannot remove VC from OTM carcasses the commercial documents must still identify the number of carcasses or part carcasses in the consignment from which the vertebral column is or is not required to be removed. You are required to keep these commercial documents for 12 months.

If you have any queries please get in touch with.....

Yours faithfully