

To: Interested Parties (see attached list)

25 April 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

THE DOMESTIC TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (WALES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008

You will recall that I wrote to you on 7 November 2007 seeking your views and comments on the above draft Regulations.

I am writing now to let you know that, after considering the responses to the consultation and following amendment to Regulation (EC) 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Community TSE Regulations), the above domestic Regulations (SI number 2008/1182 [W.119]) have now been made and **will come into force on 26 April 2008**. The additional risk to consumers from changing the age at which bovine vertebral column (VC) is classified as specified risk material (SRM) remains negligible as the change would only reinstate UK position prior to May 2006 when the SRM controls in UK were harmonised with those applicable in other Member States.

The above Regulations **will apply to animals slaughtered on or after 26 April 2008** and have the following effects on operators of approved meat plants:

- (i) The age at which bovine VC is classified as SRM has been increased from 24 months to 30 months, following amendment to the Community TSE Regulations. Therefore only VC of bovine animals aged over 30 months at slaughter (slaughtered on or after 26 April 2008) will be SRM. Consequently, it will no longer be required to remove VC from under 30 month bovines (slaughtered on or after 26 April 2008) prior to sale.

Slaughterhouses and Cutting plants will be able to supply bovine carcasses derived from animals under 30 months of age (slaughtered on or after 26 April 2008) containing VC to any butchers premises wishing to trade in such products.

Butchers wishing to remove VC from carcasses derived from bovines aged 24 to 30 months of age (slaughtered on or after 26 April 2008) no longer require specific authorisation to do so.

- (ii) VC will still be SRM in those bovines aged 24-30 months at slaughter which were slaughtered before the 26 April 2008. Transitional provisions in the above Regulations will allow VC SRM to be removed from 24-30 months carcasses slaughtered before 26 April that may still be in the distribution chain; the VC from these carcasses will still have to be removed and disposed of as SRM. In particular, the transitional arrangements allow:

- **Slaughterhouses: until 24 May 2008** to consign carcasses containing VC SRM derived from 24-30 months animals slaughtered before 26 April 2008 to

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authorised butchers (authorised on or before 25 April 2008) and or cutting plants (whether or not authorised under paragraph 12(1)(a)).

- **Cutting plants: until 31 May 2008** to remove VC SRM from 24-30 animals slaughtered before 26 April 2008.
- **Authorised butchers: until 31 May** to remove VC SRM from 24-30 months animals slaughtered before 26 April 2008. This applies only to butchers which were authorised at 25 April 2008.

Following the transitional period, all 24-30 months carcasses (derived from bovine animals slaughtered before 26 April 2008) containing VC SRM will need to be treated as animal by product.

- (iii) There is no change to the current requirements to:
- clearly identify meat containing VC that is not SRM with a blue stripe and
 - provide information on the number of carcasses containing VC that is not SRM and those containing VC that is SRM on commercial documentation relating to consignments of meat.

Therefore all meat containing VC derived from bovine animals under 30 months of age at slaughter (slaughtered on or after 26 April) must be clearly marked with a blue stripe on the label at the slaughterhouse.

- (iv) There is also no change to the current requirement requiring specific authorisation for cutting plants to remove VC from over thirty month (OTM) bovine.

Therefore only cutting plants that have been approved by the Agency under paragraph 12(1)(a) of the above Regulations can remove VC from OTM bovines. **It continues to be an offence for any other cutting plant or butchers to remove VC from OTM bovines.**

- (v) Revocation of the Beef Bones Regulations 1997 (as amended) will allow UK sourced beef bones to be used in food manufacturing. However, the current prohibition on the use of bones or bone-in cuts of bovine, ovine and caprine animals in the production of mechanically separated meat (MSM) means that beef bones **can not** be used in the production of MSM.
- (vi) The newly introduced provision on the rule on trade in the domestic regulation requires that operators wishing to export heads or un-split carcasses containing SRM must ask the Agency to obtain the required agreement from the Member State concerned.

Full details of the consultation, including a summary of responses received and final Impact Assessment (IA) can be found on our website at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/consultationresponse/tsewalesresponseamend.pdf>

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address at the bottom of page 1 of this letter.

Yours faithfully



Jayne Griffiths
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