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Germany

Livestock and Products

BSE in Germany - Update Covering 2004 2005

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Report Highlights:

In 2004, 65 cases of BSE were confirmed in Germany, compared to 54 in 2003, and 106 in 2002. Until January 19, 2005, one additional case was confirmed, taking the number of confirmed BSE cases since the first detection of BSE in Germany in November 2000, to a total of 358. In Germany all cattle older than 24 month at slaughter have to be tested for BSE, compared to 30 months in the EU. The ongoing discussion about testing age will likely result in a change to 30 months in the second half of 2005.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Berlin [GM1]
[GM]

In 2004, 65 cases of BSE were confirmed, compared to 54 in 2003. The German Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food, and Agriculture views this increase in BSE cases as being still within the expected range, as all confirmed animals were older than 4 years (48 month) and born before the introduction of the meat- and bonemeal (MBM) ban in animal feed.

As of December 31, 2004, the total number of confirmed BSE cases in Germany amounted to 357 cases. Out of these, 7 cases were detected in 2000, 125 cases in 2001, and 106 cases in 2002, 54 cases in 2003, and 65 in 2004. From January 1 through 19, 2005, one additional case was confirmed. The geographical distribution of the confirmed cases is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of confirmed BSE cases in Germany, as of December 31, 2004.

State	Number of confirmed BSE cases						Number of cattle in that state*	Total cases per 1 million head
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	total		
Bavaria	5	59	27	21	21	133	3,824,100	35
Lower-Saxony	1	17	27	7	14	66	2,652,800	25
Baden-Wuerttemberg	-	12	11	9	6	38	1,162,100	33
Schleswig-Holstein	1	12	14	1	1	29	1,241,500	23
North Rhine-Westphalia	-	2	2	4	8	16	1,401,000	11
Brandenburg	-	3	4	3	3	13	613,000	21
Saxony	-	4	4	3	2	13	522,200	25
Rhineland-Palatinate	-	4	6	-	2	12	427,500	28
Saxony-Anhalt	-	4	4	1	1	10	373,100	27
Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	-	2	4	-	3	9	563,100	16
Hesse	-	3	2	2	2	9	497,600	18
Thuringia	-	2	1	3	2	8	374,200	21
Saarland	-	1	-	-	-	1	59,100	17
Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg	-	-	-	-	-	0	20,600	0
Total	7	125	106	54	65	357	13,731,900	26

* Based on an animal census November 2002

(Source: German Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture)

BSE tests

In 2004, a total of 2,486,127 BSE tests were conducted in Germany, of which 65 BSE cases were confirmed. Out of these, 35 cases were discovered through routine testing at slaughter. All other cases were either detected through mandatory testing of "risk animals." Risk animals, include perished animals, animals that died on transport, downers (i.e. non-ambulatory animals), animals that show any kind of disease symptoms, animals that show clinical BSE symptoms, or were part of destroyed herds or cohorts of a previously confirmed BSE case (birth cohort = animals born on the same farm within 12 month before or after the birth, feeding cohort = animals that were raised together with animal with confirmed BSE within the first 12 months of life of the latter, all offspring).

Since January 25, 2001, BSE tests at slaughter became mandatory in Germany for all cattle above the age of 24 months. However, some retail chains require the testing of all cattle, irrespective of age. Testing below the age of 24 months is purely for marketing reasons and does not supply any additional value in terms of BSE measures, as tests on younger animals are not very reliable. In 2001 – 2003, between 65 and 70 percent of all cattle and calves slaughtered in Germany were tested for BSE.

The EU requires BSE testing for all risk animals above 24 months, while routine testing of healthy appearing animals is only required for cattle above 30 months. There is an ongoing discussion in Germany to move the testing age from 24 to 30 months. The proponents argue that so far only one BSE case was confirmed in animals younger than 30 months at slaughter. This case was detected in January of 2001, and occurred in an animal that was born before the ban on meat- and bonemeal (MBM) in animal feed went into effect in December 2000. Theoretically from June 2003 onwards all animals slaughtered at 30 months or younger should not have had contact with feed containing MBM. The German Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food, and Agriculture (BMVEL) in general favors a change in the obligatory testing age, however, BMVEL insists on an extra security time margin. Based on the accumulated surveillance data, the German federal agency for risk assessment (Bundesinstitut fuer Risikobewertung, BfR) is expected to carry out a BSE risk assessment in April 2005. We therefore expect the change will go into effect in the second half of 2005.

Table 2: BSE tests and results from January through December 2004

January - December 2004	Number of tests	Number of confirmed BSE cases	Percent cases per tests in that category*	Percent cases of all confirmed cases**
Animal Category				
Perished animals	224,332	23	0.010	35.4
Other risk animals	7,113	2	0.028	3.1
Animals showing clinical BSE symptoms	43	0	0.000	0.0
Animals appearing healthy at slaughter	2,248,750	35	0.002	53.8
Animals slaughtered as part of a BSE eradication measure	1,311	2	0.153	3.1
Suspicious animals to be confirmed by a lab	1,924	3	0.156	4.6
Total	2,483,473	65	0.003	100

* calculated as "number of confirmed cases" divided by "number of tests" in that category multiplied by 100

** calculated as "number of confirmed cases" in a category divided by "total number of confirmed cases" multiplied by 100

Source: German Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture

Risk Management by the German Government

For a detailed outline of the German risk management system please refer to report GM1033.

Production

In CY 2003, Germany produced 1.224 million MT of beef. 180,000 MT of beef were imported, thereof 66,000 MT from outside the EU-25 (mainly Argentina and Brazil) and 13,800 from new EU-member states (Poland and Hungary). Exports amounted to 4,423,000 MT of which 83,000 MT were sent to destinations outside the EU-25 (mostly Russia) and 2,800 MT to Hungary, Malta and the Czech Republic. Note: All figures are in carcass weight equivalent.

Table 3: German production of beef

Year	Slaughter number (in 1000 heads)	Beef production (in 1000 metric tons)
1999	4,565	1,374
2000	4,285	1,304
2001	4,353	1,360
2002	4,272	1,317
2003	3,961	1,224

Source: German Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture

Consumption

Due to consumer concerns in relation to BSE, per capita consumption of beef had dropped from 10.4 kg in 1999 to 6.8 kg in 2001¹. In 2003 it had rebound to 8.8 kg. A further increase is expected for 2004. However, due to the health related trend away from meat consumption, it is expected that the pre-BSE consumption levels will not be reached again.

Related reports:

GM1033	11/27/2001	One year after the detection of BSE in Germany
GM3006	02/27/2003	German Cattle Identification and Beef Labeling

¹ In 2000, per capita consumption was recorded at 9.6 kg. However, as BSE was detected in November of 2000, this year cannot serve as comparison.