



9th March 2006

PRESS STATEMENT

EFSA update on TSE in sheep

The Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) has notified the European Commission (EC) of the results of a second level of testing for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE)¹ of samples from one sheep from Cyprus and two sheep from France. Although a second level of testing could not classify any of the samples conclusively as BSE in sheep, there is insufficient evidence to definitively rule out the presence of BSE. Therefore, a more comprehensive third test will now be carried out consisting of a 12-18 month mouse bioassay in order to determine the types of TSE in question.

EFSA's Scientific Experts and its Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) will be meeting during the week beginning 13th March and will review the relevant scientific data and address relevant questions in relation to the CRL results. In addition, EFSA is proceeding with its ongoing preparation of a quantitative risk assessment of the BSE risk associated with sheep products. This assessment will be ready towards autumn 2006.

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¹ TSE = Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy: A family of transmissible progressive diseases that mainly affects the central nervous system characterized by spongiform degeneration and a long incubation period. Examples of TSEs are Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) and kuru in humans, scrapie in small ruminants and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in bovines.