



EMBASSY OF AUSTRALIA
WASHINGTON DC

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AUSTRALIA'S FREEDOM FROM TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES AFFECTING ANIMALS

To whom it may concern,

I can confirm that Australia continues to be free from Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies affecting animals (TSEs), including bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and scrapie.

In order to maintain Australia's BSE and scrapie-free status a number of measures have been adopted:-

- Australia has in place a range of strict quarantine and other preventative animal health measures to guard against the introduction and establishment of BSE, and these measures conform with, or are stricter than, the office International des Epizooties (OIE) and World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations.
- A legislative ban on the feeding of animal material to ruminant animals in Australia (with the exception of milk, tallow and gelatine).
- The appointment of a national coordinator for TSE monitoring and surveillance activities. The coordinator's responsibilities include ensuring that a high level of awareness about TSEs is maintained by the Australian farming communities, livestock industry groups and the veterinary profession.
- A surveillance and monitoring program is being undertaken in accordance with the OIE International Animal Health Code Chapter on BSE. A similar surveillance and monitoring program is being undertaken for scrapie. The results are published in the Australian Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly, which is sent to major trading partners and is also available on the Animal Health Australia website: <http://www.aahc.com.au>
- To assist the conduct of the surveillance program, monetary incentives are being provided by the Animal Health Australia (AHA) to encourage the submission of field samples and to cover the cost of laboratory examinations.
- The Australian Standard Diagnostic Technique, consistent with the OIE Manual, has been developed for TSEs in order to standardise testing methods utilised during the surveillance and monitoring program and other investigations for TSEs. Australian veterinary pathologists have a high level of awareness of scrapie and BSE, through specialist training programs.
- Close liaison occurs between the Chief Veterinary Officer, Chief Medical Adviser, National Food Authority, Therapeutic Goods Administration and expert scientific advisers to coordinate

appropriate Australian responses to all aspects of the food supply, blood supply and therapeutic agents relating to BSE/vCJD.

- Australian State and Territory authorities conduct awareness programs on the clinical signs of TSEs in animals for those involved in the livestock industries.
- The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has also provided awareness training on the identification of the clinical signs of TSEs for its veterinarians who undertake ante- and post-mortem inspection of animals slaughtered for human consumption at abattoirs servicing the export market.
- The importation of meat and bone meal is prohibited from all countries except New Zealand.
- Australia will continue to closely monitor international developments to ensure that preventive strategies against BSE and related diseases reflect current scientific information and are appropriate to Australian circumstances.

Australia continues to be free from TSEs affecting animals and has well prepared emergency response plans in the event the diseases might be detected in the country.

I hope this information is of assistance to your company.

Yours sincerely,

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