DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND THE MARINE
IDENTIFIES SUSPECTED BSE CASE.

The Department today announced the identification of a suspected BSE case in county Louth. The case was identified through the Department's on-going surveillance system on fallen animals (that is animals which die on farm). The animal was not presented for slaughter and did not enter the food chain.

Confirmatory tests are being undertaken and results will be available in approximately one week. If confirmed, this will be the first BSE case found in Ireland since 2013.

DAFM is now undertaking a full investigation into all relevant factors in this case - including a full epidemiological examination.

DAFM is informing the relevant national and international reference organisations and the European Commission, and will be liaising with trading partners.

Note for editors

If, as expected, the tests confirm this to be a classical case of BSE, this may impact on Ireland's recently awarded “negligible risk status” from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). In this case Ireland will revert to “controlled risk status” which applied up to last week and which facilitated trade to a wide range of international markets. It will also result in the continuation of the existing range of controls for a further number of years.

The full range of risk mitigating measures continue in place at slaughter plants, including the following:

- All animals presented for slaughter are systematically subjected to ante-mortem examination by veterinary inspectors to ensure that only healthy animals are allowed into the food chain.
- A range of tissues - identified as ‘specified risk material' - where the BSE infectivity resides in potentially infected animals are systematically removed from all slaughtered bovines of differing ages as follows:
  1. All ages: tonsils, intestines and mesentery
  2. Over 12 months: skull (including eyes and brain) and spinal cord
  3. Over 30 months: the vertebral column and associated tissues

The animal involved is a five year old cow on a dairy farm in county Louth. The investigation will include an examination of the birth cohort and progeny of the cow involved.

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