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Department announces identification of an Atypical BSE case

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine today confirmed that it has identified a case of 'Atypical BSE' in an 18 year old cow, through its surveillance of 'fallen' animals (died on farm) at knackeries.

The animal tested positive on a screening test carried out at a Department approved, accredited private laboratory over the weekend and was then subject to follow up confirmatory tests at the Department's Central Veterinary Research Laboratory.

There are no associated public health risks with this event – a comprehensive set of public health controls are in place and the animal in this case was excluded from the food chain and its carcass will be incinerated.

The disclosure of this case of Atypical BSE does not have any impact of Ireland's current OIE BSE 'controlled risk' status or trade status.

Note for editors

1. There are two types of BSE recognised
 - a. **Classical BSE** which was the basis of the extensive incidence of BSE which commenced some in the 1980s, which was associated with the feeding of meat-and-bone meal, where scientific evidence indicates that BSE is acquired in the first year of life, and

- b. **Atypical BSE** which has been identified more recently and which is thought to occur spontaneously.
2. Atypical BSE occurs sporadically in older animals with a low incidence rate. It was first recognized in the early 2000s in Europe following the large scale testing of livestock for BSE that was put in place at that time.
 - a. There have been 101 atypical BSE cases identified in the European Union during the period 2003 to 2015. This compares to a total of 2,999 cases of classical BSE during the same period.
 - b. Cases have occurred at a very low and relatively constant level over the entire period, ranging from two to eleven cases per year.
 - c. At the same time, the number of classical BSE cases has steadily dropped since 2003.
 - d. All known atypical BSE cases in the EU were detected in cattle older than six years of age.
 - e. We have identified 3 atypical cases occurred in Ireland, compared to 145 cases of classical BSE in that 13 year period. In addition, retrospective analysis identified a 2002 case as atypical BSE - bringing the total number of confirmed atypical cases in Ireland to four.
 - f. Atypical cases of BSE have also been identified in Brazil (two cases) and the USA (three cases).
3. BSE does not transfer horizontally from animal to animal – no risk to other animals arises from this case animal.

ENDS