

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

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OBJECTIVE: the position paper seeks to define the Commission's position on the framework for the eradication of BSE in the cattle herd in the United Kingdom and for the reestablishment of the single market in beef. **SUBSTANCE:** the framework plan sets out the action which the United Kingdom is in the process of taking and the action which it has undertaken to carry out in future in order to speed up the elimination of the disease. Once this action has been established it will lead to a gradual easing of the current restrictions of beef products from the United Kingdom to the rest of the EU and to third countries. With regard to the conditions and arrangements for the gradual lifting of the ban on British beef products, the Commission considers that any plan seeking gradually to restore the single market in beef will require the following actions by the United Kingdom: - implementation of a selective slaughter programme to be approved by the Commission under the Standing Veterinary Committee procedure; - introduction of an effective animal identification and movement recording system with official registration; - legislation for the removal of meat-and-bone meal from feed mills and farms and cleansing of the premises and equipment concerned; - effective implementation of the over 30 months rule including the destruction of the animals; - improved methods for removing specified bovine material from carcasses. These actions must be backed up by Community inspections to verify correct and effective implementation. This approach, which concentrates on human and animal health should enable agreement on a procedure allowing the gradual removal of the ban, using the following four stages: a) animals and meat from certified herds (no history of BSE and no exposure to infected meat-and-bone meal); b) embryos; c) animals born after a specific date; d) meat from animals under 30 months; e) meat from animals over 30 months (longer term). Exports to third countries will be permitted in parallel to phased exports to other Member States, in line with the principle of precaution. The document defines the procedure to be applied at each stage in order to guarantee the successful outcome of this framework.