

**Fourth OIE/FAO-APHCA Regional Workshop and Working Group Meeting
on BSE and Other Prion Diseases, in collaboration with NVRQS, MIFAFF
(Seoul, Republic of Korea, 24-26 February 2010)**

Conclusion and Recommendations

(The background)

1. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is a progressive, fatal disease of the nervous system of cattle. The disease has a long incubation period and there is currently no treatment nor vaccine for the disease prevention.
2. BSE is one of the diseases known as Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)/Prion Diseases. Other TSEs/Prion Diseases include Scrapie in sheep, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and elk, Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy (TME) in mink, Feline Spongiform Encephalopathy (FSE) in cat and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in human.
3. BSE was first recognized and defined in the United Kingdom in 1986. Since 1987, 25 countries in North America, Europe, Middle East and Asia have reported cases of BSE to the OIE. (Some countries had only imported cases.)
4. Appropriate and effective control and prevention measures including BSE surveillance and diagnosis in accordance with the OIE standards are the key and essential tools to ensure animal health and food safety, which have great direct impact on public health as well as effects on sound socio-economic growth and development of a country.
5. To promote the safe trade of animals and their products (in particular beef) in our Region, it is important that BSE risk should be assessed for compliance with the OIE standards. For this, efficient and relevant BSE surveillance backed by appropriate capacity of BSE diagnosis should be undertaken in each country.
6. Considering these circumstances, the first and the second OIE/FAO-APHCA Regional Workshops and Working Group Meetings on BSE and other Prion Diseases, mainly focusing on advanced hands-on training for technical officers, were organized in Tsukuba, Japan; in collaboration with the OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE, the National Institute of Animal Health of Japan (NIAH-Japan), in November-December

2005 and in January 2007, respectively. The main objectives of those two Workshops were to train technical staff from selected Asian member countries and to strengthen their laboratory diagnostic capability as well as promoting information exchange and scientific networking among them.

7. As the follow-up of the first and the second Workshops and Working Group Meetings, the third OIE/FAO-APHCA Regional Workshop and Working Group Meeting on BSE and Other Prion Diseases was successfully organized, in collaboration with the National Diagnostic Center for Exotic Animal Diseases and the China Animal Health and Epidemiology Centers in Qingdao, PR China, in September 2008.

(The fourth Workshop and Working Group Meeting)

8. The fourth Workshop and Working Group Meeting, as the follow-up of the third one, was successfully organized in collaboration with the National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service (NVRQS), Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MIFAFF), in Seoul, RO Korea, from 24 to 26 February 2010.
9. This Workshop was attended by 7 participants from seven member countries, namely, India, RO Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Japan (the latter also in the capacity of the OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE) including almost 100 local observers; as well as representatives from OIE Reference Laboratories in Canada and the United Kingdom (UK), OIE HQ in Paris, FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office. The participant from PR China could not attend this Workshop and Working Group Meeting but the country paper and the proposals for future activities were submitted. The paper was incorporated in the workshop proceedings and the proposed activities were raised for attention at the Working Group Meeting, respectively.
10. The main objectives of this Workshop were: (1) to exchange and share updated information and knowledge on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs diagnosis and epidemiology; (2) to strengthen scientific networking for technical collaboration on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs within and outside the Region; (3) to share and exchange updated information on:
 - (i) the OIE International Standards on BSE and BSE risk status recognition,
 - (ii) the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE-PVS) and
 - (iii) the OIE Twinning Project.

11. This Workshop was informed of: (1) advances in diagnosis and current global situation on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs, which include overview of neuropathological diagnosis and research works on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs (e.g. Scrapie, and CWD) by experts from the OIE Reference Laboratories in Canada, Japan and the UK; and (2) updated OIE International Standards on BSE and official BSE risk status recognition; and OIE-PVS and OIE Twinning Project by an expert from OIE HQ.
12. This Workshop noted the excellent and informative country reports by the 7 participating countries on current BSE and other Prion Diseases situations including surveillance, advanced studies on diagnosis of BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs such as ELISA, IHC and WB as well as other new findings related/relevant to the BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs.

(Recognition)

13. This Workshop noted that mutual collaborations and dialogues on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs diagnosis among the participating countries as well as between the participating countries and the OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE in Japan have been strengthened during the past years. All the participating countries expressed their highest gratitude to the continuous collaborative supports by FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office and sincerely looked forward to continued co-organization of the future workshops/meetings and training programmes.
14. This Workshop noted the importance of continuous and periodic exchanges and sharing of updated information and knowledge on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs diagnosis and epidemiology as well as prevention and control measures on the diseases among the participating countries.
15. The Workshop noted that India, RO Korea and Malaysia have submitted their dossiers for BSE risk status recognition to OIE HQ in 2009-2010. Their experiences were shared with the other participating countries, who have been encouraged to submit the same in due course.
16. The Workshop also noted that PR China has been actively implementing several strategies to enhance BSE risk analysis and assessment as well as BSE surveillance in order to submit dossier for the OIE BSE risk status recognition in the near future.

17. The Workshop noted that budgetary constraint is the main drawback, which forces most of the participating countries to limit their endeavors to improve BSE diagnostic capacity and to comply with the OIE International Standards, including BSE surveillance activities.
18. FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office are strongly requested by the participating countries to continue to coordinate, facilitate and support the exchange of materials and reagents, visits of scientists/experts on BSE and other Prion Disease/TSE diagnosis among the member countries as well as between the participating countries and the OIE Reference Laboratories.
19. This Workshop noted the interest in joining the OIE Twinning Project - with the OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE in Japan - by the participating countries, namely: PR China and India.
20. This Workshop was informed about an official request to FAO and OIE Asia-Pacific Office by ASEAN through the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) for support in relation to the OIE BSE risk status recognition in the ASEAN Member States.

(Recommendations)

21. Continuous collaboration and dialogues amongst the participating countries and with the OIE Reference Laboratories shall be encouraged in order to improve BSE and other Prion Disease/TSE diagnostic capacity and the disease surveillance system in each participating country.
22. Participating countries and researchers shall: (1) update relevant information and knowledge on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSE diagnosis as well as their activities on these diseases control and prevention through their existing network; and (2) exchange/share their relevant information and knowledge amongst them.
23. FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office are strongly requested by the participating countries to coordinate, facilitate and support technical assistance on BSE and other Prion Disease/TSE diagnosis between the OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE in Japan and national diagnostic center(s) in the participating countries; utilizing existing mechanisms such as the OIE Twinning Project, the FAO-APHCA's Technical Cooperation

between Developing Countries (TCDC), etc., wherever possible.

24. OIE Reference Laboratory for BSE in Japan, upon official request(s), shall consider providing technical support to national diagnostic center(s) in the participating countries to strengthen BSE diagnostic capacity at national/regional level; while FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office would coordinate and facilitate this activity.
25. FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office shall consider co-organizing a regional workshop/meeting on the feasibility of preparing a dossier for OIE BSE risk status recognition for policy-level officers of Veterinary Authorities in the ASEAN Member States. Other participating countries in Working Group will also be invited.
26. FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office shall consider co-organizing other workshop(s) on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs when official request(s) is/are made by the participating countries in relation to the disease episode(s) in the Region and/or technical advancement(s) or significant improvement(s) on BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSE diagnosis is/are made in the future.

(Acknowledgement)

27. The participating countries acknowledged continuous support from the OIE Reference Laboratories for BSE and other Prion Diseases/TSEs (Dr. Yokoyama, Dr. Simmons and Dr. Balachandran), OIE HQ, FAO-APHCA and OIE Asia-Pacific Office (Japan Trust Fund) as well as the host agency – the NVRQS, MIFAFF of RO Korea for their contributions to this Workshop and Working Group Meeting.