

From the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson,



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Tim J Smith  
Chief Executive  
Food Standard Agency  
Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6NH

Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS

Tel: +44 (0)20 7210 5150-4  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7210 5407

liam.donaldson@dh.gsi.gov.uk  
www.dh.gov.uk/cmo

Dear 

### **REVIEW OF OFFICIAL BSE CONTROLS ON OVER THIRTY MONTHS CATTLE**

Thank you for your letter of 29 April giving me the opportunity to comment on your proposals for changes to official supervision of BSE controls by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) to cattle over thirty months.

I note the view of the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) that the risk to human health estimate for the revised enforcement regimes remains very low provided the prevalence of BSE remains low. I cannot stress too highly how important it is, therefore, that the monitoring of BSE remains at its current level to maintain confidence in the accurate ascertainment of the continued declining number of BSE cases.

As you indicate, the specified risk material (SRM) controls are a key public health measure. It is vital that these controls are not changed. I recognise that the risk assessment model used to assess the impact of the proposed MHS changes has been considered by SEAC, and I note the FSA's reassurance that the proposed changes will not have a detrimental impact on the SRM controls. However, continued close monitoring of the changes is critical to ensure enforcement is maintained.

I also recognise that the changes implemented over the last two years indicate no increase in control breaches, and would welcome future reports from you showing the results of your monitoring of the impact of the proposed changes.

I am copying this letter to Dr Harry Burns, CMO Scotland, Dr Tony Jewell, CMO Wales, and Dr Elizabeth Mitchell, CMO Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

**SIR LIAM DONALDSON  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**