



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 21/25

Change to GB's WOAHA BSE Risk Status and Impact on Exports to the EU

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Purpose

To inform OVs that, from 04 June 2025, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has officially recognised the BSE status of England & Wales, and Scotland as Negligible Risk (NR).

Background

Recognition of NR status for England & Wales, and Scotland, means that abattoirs and cutting plants in Great Britain (GB) will no longer be required by domestic legislation to remove and dispose of certain tissues defined as Specified Risk Material (SRM) for controlled risk (CR) countries (**Annex 1**).

The timeline for each country or trading partner to formally recognise GB's NR status will vary:

- a. **For domestic trade within GB:** under assimilated Commission Decision 2007/453, the BSE risk status of England & Wales, and Scotland is recognised as NR on publication of the updated status on WOAHA's website. This allows abattoirs and cutting plants to handle SRM as stipulated under the BSE NR requirements.
- b. **For exports to the EU and movements to Northern Ireland (NI):** NR status from WOAHA is not automatically recognised. The EU needs to update EU Commission Decision 2007/453 to provide formal recognition of NR status – this may take six months. Any trade with the EU or NI in the meantime will require the SRM controls for CR countries to remain in place.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

- c. **For exports to the rest of the world:** there are different processes to recognise BSE risk status in different countries. Trading partners may have requirements for SRM removal which do not align with CR or NR requirements under either WOAH or EU requirements. Please follow the requirements and accompanying guidance notes of the relevant Export Health Certificates (EHC), in conjunction with the following considerations:
- If an EHC states that the UK/GB has BSE controlled risk (CR) status, but does not specify different processing conditions dependent on risk status, the certificate can be signed on the basis that NR is a lesser risk status than CR.
 - If an EHC has different processing conditions/definitions of SRM dependent on risk status **as recognised by WOAH**, the certificate can be signed so long as the conditions in the certificate and for products from NR countries have been met.
 - If an EHC has different processing conditions/definitions of SRM dependent on BSE risk status but does not specify that this is as recognised by WOAH, the OV should ensure that the conditions of the certificate can be certified. If relevant for the requirements of the certificate, the exporter should confirm if the importing country recognises the UK's status as NR or CR before certifying for exports produced under NR requirements.

Defra is working to agree updated EHCs that reflect the UK's NR status with trade partners, and to seek recognition of NR status by countries that maintain their own BSE recognition process, such as the USA.

Impact

Since GB's NR status is published on the WOAH website, abattoirs have the option to implement the changes for the domestic market. It will be a commercial decision as to whether establishments follow CR or NR status requirements.

If an establishment follows NR requirements and cannot meet the export requirements outlined in the relevant EHC, its products will not be eligible for movement to NI or for export to the EU ahead of the EU recognising GB's NR status. This applies to any product derived from a bovine animal that has been slaughtered, dressed or produced implementing NR status controls.

EU trade is a significant trading partner for beef and derived products – most GB beef exports, including meat, offal and animal by-products (ABP) go to the EU directly or via NI. It is important that establishments handling beef and derived products recognise the limitations and risks of adopting the NR changes ahead of the EU recognising GB's NR

status. Anyone exporting to the EU and NI in this time will need to demonstrate that their products meet EU requirements, including following CR status requirements.

The same applies to exports to any country that does not automatically recognise GB's BSE NR status after the WOH publication.

If an FBO processes carcasses under CR requirements, all tissues considered SRM under CR requirements must be treated and segregated as Cat 1 ABP and must be disposed of as Cat 1 ABP. Furthermore, it cannot be sold as food for human consumption. These products cannot be reclassified to a lower-risk category at any stage.

The TSE rules for ovine and caprine animals have not changed.

The Support Health Attestation (SHA) ET241 template for beef and animal by-products will be amended and published soon to facilitate certification of products produced while implementing CR controls. Food Business Operators (FBO) may choose to use other templates, but it is recommended that the ET241 template that will be published here ([Official Veterinarian Training](#)) is used to avoid delays during the export certification process.

Action

OVs must be satisfied that the products being certified meet all requirements stipulated on an EHC, including all BSE attestations.

In the case of any importing country or territory that has different processing requirements dependent on risk status, and has not recognised GB's NR status, the OV must be satisfied of strict adherence to CR requirements (as specified by the importing country authority if applicable) when processing beef carcasses and animal by-products. This can be ascertained from the SHA from the slaughterhouse or cutting/processing plant or other relevant internal movement documents.

Veterinarians signing SHAs for export to the EU can only sign them if satisfied that strict CR controls have been implemented by the FBO.

Traders are responsible for ensuring their products meet the requirements of the destination country so that OVs can certify with confidence prior to export.

Annex 1 – CR and NR processing table

Bovines born, reared and slaughtered in region (Art5(2) of 999/2001)	CR status	NR status
Skull, brain and eyes (excluding the mandible) of bovines over 12m of age	SRM	SRM
Spinal cord of bovines over 12 months	SRM	SRM
Vertebral column (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the spinous and transverse processes of the cervical, thoracic and lumbar vertebrae and the median sacral crest and wings of the sacrum, but including the dorsal root ganglia, or bovines over 30 months)	SRM	NOT SRM
Tonsils of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Mesentery including mesenteric fat, mesenteric ganglion complex and mesenteric nerves of bovines of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Caecum of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Last 4m of the small intestine of bovines of all ages (small intestine comprises of duodenum, jejunum and ileum)	SRM	NOT SRM

Further Information

APHA's Centre for International Trade – Carlisle, email: exports@apha.gov.uk Telephone: 03000 300 201

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