

Anne Milton MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

2 June 2011

Our ref: MC06712

Dear Minister

BSE TESTING OF CATTLE SLAUGHTERED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

This letter sets out the Food Standards Agency's advice on whether UK-wide implementation of proposed changes to the EU rules on BSE testing would be acceptable on food safety grounds.

Member States have agreed a European Commission Decision permitting the UK and 24 other of the European Union's 27 Member States, to raise the age threshold for BSE testing of healthy cattle slaughtered for human consumption from 48 months to 72 months. The BSE testing surveillance requirements for "risk" cattle (those most likely to test BSE test positive, but not BSE suspects) would remain largely unchanged and those for BSE suspects (cattle with clinical symptoms of disease) would remain unchanged.

Subject to completion of a month's scrutiny later this month and publication in the Official Journal, the change could be adopted from 1 July 2011.

Adoption of the changes permitted by the Decision in the UK is subject to FSA advice in relation to food safety and agreement by Ministers.

The Decision would also allow for BSE testing of a sample of healthy cattle slaughtered for human consumption aged over 72 months from 1 January 2013. Before then, this aspect of the Decision will be subject to further discussion and advice from the FSA.

The main protection for consumers from exposure to BSE is provided by the removal of specified risk material (SRM), which is estimated to remove almost all of


the infectivity from an infected animal. In addition, cattle born or reared in the UK before the reinforced feed ban came into force in August 1996 remain permanently excluded from the food supply.

In the light of advice from the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC), the views of the UK Chief Medical Officers and following public consultation, the Board considered its advice at its meeting on 25 May. Subject to the condition that effective surveillance for BSE remains in place, the Board agreed to advise Ministers that:

- it would be acceptable on grounds of risk to consumers to raise the age threshold for BSE testing healthy cattle slaughtered in the UK for human consumption to 72 months from July this year;
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This advice will be published on the FSA's web site with the advice from SEAC and CMOs referred to above.

I am copying this letter to Dame Sally Davies, and am writing in similar terms to Jim Paice, Edwin Poots, Michelle O'Neill, Michael Matheson, Richard Lochhead, Lesley Griffiths and Alun Davies.

yours

JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Alun Davies AM
Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

2 June 2011

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Dear Deputy Minister

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Your early views on this advice would be appreciated, so that the necessary arrangements can be put in place and stakeholders informed of any change in the BSE testing regime that is to occur on 1 July. If you should have any concerns or questions, please let me know so we may discuss further when we meet on 15 June.

I am copying this letter to Edwina Hart, and am writing in similar terms to Lesley Griffiths, Anne Milton, Jim Paice, Edwin Poots, Michelle O'Neill, Michael Matheson and Richard Lochhead.

yours

PR

JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Room 1N.08
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

2 June 2011

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Dear Cabinet Secretary

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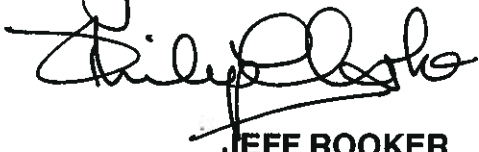
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I am writing in similar terms to Michael Matheson, Anne Milton, Jim Paice, Edwin Poots, Michelle O'Neill, Lesley Griffiths and Alun Davies.

yours


JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Michelle O'Neill MLA
Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

✉ June 2011

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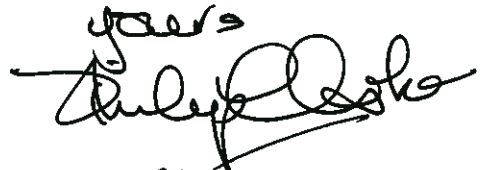
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I am writing in similar terms to Edwin Poots, Anne Milton, Jim Paice, Michael Matheson, Richard Lochhead, Lesley Griffiths and Alun Davies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Rooker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

PP JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Michael Matheson MSP
Minister for Public Health
Room 1E.10
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

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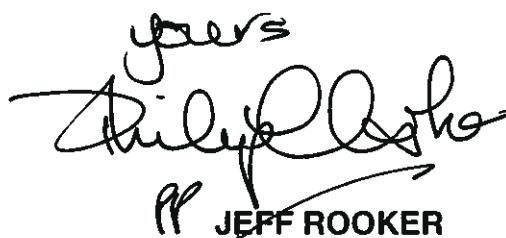
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I am copying this letter to Dr Harry Burns, and am writing in similar terms to Richard Lochhead, Anne Milton, Jim Paice, Edwin Poots, Michelle O'Neill, Lesley Griffiths and Alun Davies.

yours

PP

JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Health and Social Services
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

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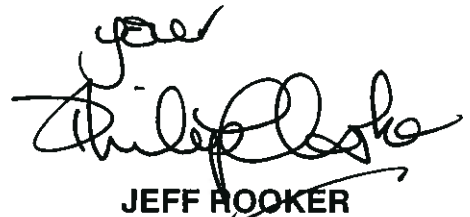
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JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Rt Hon Jim Paice MP
Minister of State for Agriculture and Food
9 Millbank
C/O 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

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JEFF ROOKER

Approved by the Chair and signed in his absence

Edwin Poots MLA
Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Room C5.10
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

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