

**PROPOSED LETTER TO THE VETERINARY RECORD FROM
DEALLER ET AL ON THE "YORKSHIRE CASE"**

From: J W Wilesmith
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Epidemiology
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To: ✓ Dr D Matthews - Tolworth TJ

cc: ✓ Mr K C Taylor
✓ Mr I Robertson

1. As promised, and just in case the letter does get published in the *Veterinary Record* before returning from the quinquennial holiday, the following may be of help in replying, specifically, to the last three sentences of the penultimate paragraph of the proposed letter.
2. As a general point, and as you know, Dealler and Lacey are unaware of the considerable variation in the age-specific negative rate. A response to this section of the letter could therefore be along the following lines:

"The authors of this letter are clearly unaware of the considerable variation in the age-specific negative rate which has been observed in suspect cases of BSE slaughtered and examined histopathologically. The authors therefore should have taken account of this before quoting crude negative rates. More specifically, an analysis fo the suspect cases, which were born after 18 July, and for which a histopathological diagnosis was available before 1 February 1992 compared with such animals for which a histopathological diagnosis was available before 1 November 1993 is relevant. The results are summarised in Table 1. (See separate page)

These results can be compared with our most recent analysis of the negative rate in suspect cases of BSE in animals which have slaughtered and were born before 18 July 1988. The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 2. (See separate page)

This clearly indicates that the comparison quoted is inappropriate and ignores the numeracy required in this epidemiological analysis. Therefore the claim that the purported "change in reporting procedure must distort recent epidemiological trends of the disease" is totally unfounded.

93/12.17/3.1

3. I have naturally edited the above to remove any caustic comments. We can only hope that the letter is the subject of scientific scrutiny as this will result in the authors being asked questions on the above aspect.
4. I would be grateful if you could let me know if you think that more is required in response to this aspect of the proposed letter. I can obviously forewarn Martin Alder at the *Veterinary Record* that he should contact you or Kevin in my absence should the letter be submitted; I would just tell him that I had heard a rumour.

J W WILESMITH

93/12.17/3.2

AGE (MTHS) OF SUSPECT BSE CASES AT ONSET OF CLINICAL SIGNS	SUSPECT CASES OF BSE BORN AFTER 18 JULY 1988 FOR WHICH THE HISTOPATHOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS WAS AVAILABLE:							
	BEFORE 1 FEBRUARY 1992				BEFORE 1 NOVEMBER 1993			
	No SLAUGHTERED	No NEGATIVE	% NEGATIVE	No SLAUGHTERED	No NEGATIVE	% NEGATIVE	No SLAUGHTERED	% NEGATIVE
<12	7	7	100	13	13	100	100	
12-23	41	41	100	83	82	98.80	98.80	
24-35	134	124	92.53	426	383	89.9	89.9	
36-47	37	30	81.08	2289	681	29.75	29.75	
48-59	0	0	0	3505	385	10.98	10.98	
60-71	0	0	0	16	5	31.25	31.25	
TOTAL	219	202	92.22	6332	1549	24.46	24.46	

TABLE 1

93/12.17/3.3

CH25/1XA0

		AGE (MTHS) OF SUSPECT BSE CASES, AT THE ONSET OF CLINICAL SIGNS, WHICH WERE BORN BEFORE 18 JULY 1988													
		<24	24-35	36-47	48-59	60-71	72-83	84-95	96-107	108-119	120-131	132-143	≥144		
% NEGATIVE ON HISTOPATHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION	N	92.31	62.78	11.45	5.44	6.42	11.12	22.35	35.58	52.51	64.55	73.33	81.97		
	13	317	6524	27395	25810	10250	3248	1231	558	220	125	122			

TABLE 2