

17 APR 1989 | 21

BSE IN PETFOOD

1. You met the Parliamentary Secretary yesterday to discuss your minute of 17 March 1989 about BSE in petfood.

2. The Parliamentary Secretary said that he was concerned about the possibility that countries in which BSE had not yet been detected could be exporting raw meat materials (in particular crushed heads) contaminated with the disease to the UK for use in petfood manufacture. The industry should be setting up a committee to monitor the risk of BSE contamination. You explained that imported crushed heads were extensively used in the petfood industry and that Pedigree Petfoods had commissioned research about BSE and were also reviewing and collating research from other sources. Moreover, veterinarians in the industry as well as in private practice were looking out for signs of BSE and other spongiform encephalopathies in domestic animals; the symptoms of spongiform encephalopathies in domestic animals were so dramatic that it was most unlikely that veterinarians would miss them.

3. As far as current research was concerned, you said that infective levels of the scrapie agent in petfood were so low that, even if domestic animals were susceptible to BSE (and there was no evidence that they were), there was unlikely to be any risk of the disease developing.

4. The Parliamentary Secretary asked whether you might agree to their research being passed to the Tyrrell Committee as well as being published for public consumption. You said that you were prepared to let MAFF have the results of their research. It seemed probable that they would also agree to it being passed to Tyrrell and published in a reputable journal, such as the Veterinary Record.

5. In conclusion, the Parliamentary Secretary said that he did not feel it essential at the present for him to have a meeting with the industry to discuss BSE. However, he would welcome the opportunity to meet the industry on a social occasion to discuss this issue less formally.

ACTION POINTS

6. I should be grateful if you could pursue, at an opportune time, the possibilities of (a) releasing the results of their research work to the Tyrrell Committee and (b) an invitation for the Parliamentary Secretary to meet the industry on a social occasion.

*I imagine you will wish to pursue this on yourself?
M. Garnett.*

[Signature]
Steven Gleave
APS/Mr Thompson
14 April 1989

○ Mr Garnett + 1
- Mr [Signature]
17/4

P-016A

cc Mrs Stagg
Miss Phillips
Mr Capstick
Mr Meldrum
Mrs Attridge
Mr Cruickshank
Mr Griffiths
Dr Crossett
Mr McKinley
Mr Cockbill
Mr Suich

DTE 018 A