

SECOND CASE OF CJD IN A DAIRY FARMER

STATEMENT BY DH

The Government's expert advisers have considered this case and have agreed that there are no features that give cause for undue concern. The symptoms of CJD in this case were entirely consistent with the development of the sporadic form of CJD, and there was no evidence that the patient had been exposed to animals associated with BSE, or to their products, any more than many other farm workers involved in animal husbandry. Since the illness of the cows and the patient occurred within months of each other, the animals and the patient had presumably incubated disease in parallel for some years. It is most unlikely therefore that there is any direct link between the cases of BSE and the occurrence of disease in the patient.

Although CJD is a rare disease, and the total numbers of cases in the UK remain low, two cases might occur in dairy farmers by chance. It is therefore not possible to reach any conclusions about a connection between BSE and CJD as a result of these two CJD cases.

However, the Government's expert advisers have emphasised again the importance of continuing to monitor all cases of CJD in the UK particularly with a view to establishing any link through occupation or in any other way.

This case does not suggest that there is any need to revise the measures already taken to safeguard the public health against occupational and any other possible route of exposure to the BSE agent.