

Note by The BSE Inquiry Secretariat

The Maff Liason Unit has supplied a copy of the relevant Hansard extract which is at YB 92/11.05/4.1

PQ's 101 AND 102

I have no idea what lies behind these questions but propose, subject to comments from recipients, to submit the attached draft reply. Could I please have any comments by close of business tomorrow (Tuesday).

Robert Lawson

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26 October 1992

Mrs Brown - by Fax

- cc: Mr K Taylor
- Mr Robertson
- Mr Bell
- Dr Cawthorne
- Mr Perrins
- Mr Edwards

Miss Harrold - please find out if supplementaries are required. If so, please draft a few, with a contribution on BSE.

*Supplementaries are required
cc. BSE section.*

*For Dagon (AED 3/11) Yes not yet received
but AED 3/11
Did we provide supplementaries?*

[Signature]
3/11.
Yes attached for your perusal.
Mr Martin.
Thanks.
[Signature]
3/11

PQ 101-102
ORAL QUESTION
28 OCTOBER 1992

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian): To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, if he will review his policy towards random sampling in cattle for disease.

Mr Bill Etherington (Sunderland North): To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, what is his policy towards random sampling for disease in cattle.

DRAFT REPLY

A HIGH PROPORTION OF CATTLE ARE SUBJECTED TO ANTE-MORTEM VETERINARY EXAMINATION AT SLAUGHTERHOUSES, AND FROM 1 JANUARY 1993 THEY ALL WILL BE. ALL CATTLE ARE ALREADY SUBJECT TO MEAT INSPECTION. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RANDOM SAMPLING OF CATTLE ELSEWHERE, FOR EXAMPLE ON FARMS, IS NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH ANY DISEASE PROBLEM OF WHICH I AM CURRENTLY AWARE.

Pass, Jones
7. 270 x 1509

92/10.26/1.2

PQ 101
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28 OCTOBER 1992

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DRAFT REPLY

A HIGH PROPORTION OF CATTLE ARE SUBJECTED TO ANTE-MORTEM VETERINARY EXAMINATION AT SLAUGHTERHOUSES, AND FROM 1 JANUARY 1993 THEY ALL WILL BE. ALL CATTLE ARE ALREADY SUBJECT TO MEAT INSPECTION. IN GENERAL, I BELIEVE THAT RANDOM SAMPLING HAS ONLY A LIMITED ROLE TO PLAY IN CONTROL OF CATTLE DISEASES.

92/10.26/1.3

NEW EVIDENCE

1. IS THERE ANY NEW EVIDENCE ABOUT THE SPREAD OF BSE?

RANDOM TESTING FOR BSE

2. WHY NOT RANDOMLY SAMPLE SLAUGHTERED CATTLE FOR BSE?

NEW BRAIN DISORDER

3. WHAT ABOUT REPORTS OF NEW FORM OF BSE?
4. IS THIS NEW BRAIN DISORDER A THREAT?

RESEARCH: DR HARASH NARANG

5. WHY IS MAFF NOT FUNDING NARANG?
6. IS MAFF PURSUING RESEARCH FOR A LIVE ANIMAL DIAGNOSTIC TEST?
7. WOULD MAFF CONSIDER NEW PROPOSALS?

SE'S IN OTHER SPECIES

8. WHAT ABOUT DISEASE SPREADING IN KUDUS?
9. HOW MANY KNOWN CASES OF KUDUS?

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. WHAT INVESTIGATIONS INTO CATTLE DISEASES ARE UNDERTAKEN BY MAFF?
2. WHAT ABOUT RANDOM SAMPLING OF BADGERS?

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. WHAT INVESTIGATIONS INTO CATTLE DISEASES ARE UNDERTAKEN BY MAFF?

THERE IS A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT FOR ALL CATTLE HERDS TO BE TESTED FOR TUBERCULOSIS AND BRUCELLOSIS. MY DEPARTMENT ARE CURRENTLY TESTING THE ENTIRE NATIONAL CATTLE HERD FOR ENZOOTIC BOVINE LEUKOSIS. SINCE 1988 RANDOM TESTING OF CATTLE BLOOD SAMPLES FOR WARBLE FLY HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS A VOLUNTARY CATTLE HEALTH SCHEME RUN BY STATE VETERINARY SERVICE WHICH ENABLES HERD OWNERS TO MONITOR THE DISEASES ENZOOTIC BOVINE LEUKOSIS (EBL), INFECTION BOVINE RHINOTRACHEITIS (IBR) AND LEPTOSPIROSIS HARDJO.

2. WHAT ABOUT RANDOM SAMPLING OF BADGERS?

WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING VERY CLOSELY AT OUR POLICY ON CULLING BADGERS AND, IN PARTICULAR, WHAT USE MAY BE MADE OF THE TEST FOR DIAGNOSING TB IN LIVE BADGERS. A DECISION HAS NOT BEEN MADE.

PQs 101 AND 102: ORAL SUPPLEMENTARIES (BSE)

NEW EVIDENCE

1. IS THERE ANY NEW EVIDENCE ABOUT THE SPREAD OF BSE?

- NOTHING HAS OCCURRED TO CAST ANY DOUBT ON THE OPINION OF MAFF AND ITS EXPERT ADVISERS THAT MEASURES TAKEN WILL ERADICATE THE DISEASE.

RANDOM TESTING FOR BSE

2. WHY NOT RANDOMLY SAMPLE SLAUGHTERED CATTLE FOR BSE?

- NOT NECESSARY. OFFALS BAN REMOVES FROM THE FOOD CHAIN THOSE TISSUES CONSIDERED MOST LIKELY TO CONTAIN INFECTIVE AGENT. ALSO WAS LOW PRIORITY IN RESEARCH RECOMMENDED BY THE TYRRELL COMMITTEE AND WOULD ONLY DIRECT RESOURCES AWAY FROM MORE IMPORTANT WORK.

NEW BRAIN DISORDER

3. WHAT ABOUT REPORTS OF NEW FORM OF BSE?

- THE VETERINARY RECORD HAS PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE ON A NEW BRAIN DISORDER OF CATTLE DISCOVERED THROUGH OUR CONTROL MEASURES FOR BSE. ALTHOUGH IT PRESENTS SIMILAR CLINICAL SIGNS TO BSE THERE ARE MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN HISTOPATHOLOGY AND INCUBATION PERIODS BETWEEN THE TWO. MUST EMPHASISE THAT THIS IS NOT BSE.

4. IS THIS NEW BRAIN DISORDER A THREAT?

- WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHETHER THE AGENT OF THIS DISEASE IS TRANSMISSIBLE. IN ANY CASE, CASES SO FAR IDENTIFIED HAD SHOWN SIMILAR SYMPTOMS TO THOSE OF BSE, AND THEREFORE HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED AND INCINERATED, SO THAT IF A TRANSMISSIBLE AGENT WERE INVOLVED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED.

RESEARCH: DR HARASH NARANG

5. WHY IS MAFF NOT FUNDING NARANG?

- NARANG APPLIED TO RESEARCH A POST-MORTEM TEST. ONE ALREADY EXISTS WHICH IS SENSITIVE AND SPECIFIC. NEVERTHELESS MAFF CO-OPERATED BY SUPPLYING MATERIAL FOR HIS RESEARCH WORK.

6. IS MAFF PURSUING RESEARCH FOR A LIVE ANIMAL DIAGNOSTIC TEST?

- YES. AS PART OF ITS WIDE PROGRAMME WHICH IS SPENDING £5M ON BSE RESEARCH THIS YEAR.

7. WOULD MAFF CONSIDER NEW PROPOSALS?

- YES. IF NARANG'S WORK HAS CHANGED DIRECTION, WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY NEW PROPOSALS.

SE'S IN OTHER SPECIES

8. WHAT ABOUT DISEASE SPREADING IN KUDUS?

- EVIDENCE POINTS TO THIS SPECIES BEING PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE DISEASE (SUGGESTED BY POSSIBILITY OF MATERNAL TRANSMISSION AND SHORT INCUBATION PERIOD).

9. HOW MANY KNOWN CASES OF KUDUS?

- FIVE OUT OF THE EIGHT BORN AT LONDON ZOO SINCE 1987. IN ONE OF THESE NEITHER FEED NOR MATERNAL TRANSMISSION SEEM TO BE FACTORS. FURTHER STUDIES AS TO WHY KUDU ARE SO SUSCEPTIBLE AND WHY THEY APPARENTLY TRANSMIT INFECTION (AS SHEEP DO WITH SCRAPIE) WHILE CATTLE APPARENTLY DO NOT, MAY PROVIDE SOME EXPLANATION OF THIS.

PQ 102
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28 OCTOBER 1992

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DRAFT REPLY

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92/10.26/1.8

BULL POINTS

- RANDOM SAMPLING FOR DISEASE IN THE FIELD IS LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK UNLESS SPECIFICALLY TARGETTED
- RANDOM SAMPLING OF CATTLE BRAINS FOR BSE HAS BEEN GIVEN ONLY A VERY LOW PRIORITY BY THE TYRRELL COMMITTEE