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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS

Telephone 01-210 3000

*From the Chief Medical Officer*

Sir Donald Acheson KBE DM DSc FRCP FFCM FFOM

Mr K C Meldrum  
 Chief Veterinary Officer  
 Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
 Government Buildings  
 Hook Rise South  
 Tolworth  
 Surbiton  
 Surrey  
 KT6 7NG

3 January 1990

*Dear Mr Meldrum*

## BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY

You will recall that we have previously discussed the potential risks of BSE occurring in other countries as a result of the continuing export from the UK of meat and bone that may be contaminated by scrapie or possibly BSE.

I remain concerned that we are not being consistent in our attempts to contain the risks of BSE. Having banned the feeding of meat and bone meal to ruminants in 1988, we should take steps to prevent these UK products being fed to ruminants in other countries. This could be achieved either through a ban on the export of meat and bone meal, or at least by the proper labelling of these products to make it absolutely clear they should not be fed to ruminants. Unless some such action is taken the difficult problems we have faced with BSE may well occur in other countries who import UK meat and bone meal. Surely it is short sighted for us to risk being seen in future as having been responsible for the introduction of BSE to the food chain in other countries.

I would be very interested to hear how you feel this gap in the present precautionary measures to eliminate BSE should be closed. We should be aiming at the global elimination of this new bovine disease. The export of our meat and bone meal is a continuing risk to other countries.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Donald Acheson*

Copy: Dr Metters  
 Dr Pickles

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