

7/25/11

DEER BRAIN SURVEY

1. The Parliamentary Secretary will wish to be aware of a survey of deer brains for signs of a spongiform encephalopathy.
2. The purpose of the study will be to gather evidence of freedom from any spongiform encephalopathy in the UK deer population to support our efforts to resume trade in deer with countries with which BSE has disrupted it.
3. This will be a low key study with no publicity to avoid unnecessary media interest. It will be carried out in two stages:
 - (i) A small scale examination of around 30 deer brains to establish the normal histology of the healthy brain; and
 - (ii) A larger scale random examination of 300 or more adult deer brains drawn from both deer farms and parks to establish whether there is any evidence of a cervine spongiform encephalopathy.
4. The industry have agreed to cooperate with the study and will supply the necessary brain material. No compensation will be paid. The only cost to Government will be for the laboratory examinations which will be borne within existing resources.
5. Although the sample size would be too small to provide scientifically valid evidence that there is no cervine spongiform encephalopathy in the UK (4,000 odd brains would be necessary for that) a negative result would aid our efforts to have trade in deer resumed.

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 20 November 1991

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