

BSE: MARMOSSET EXPERIMENT

1. As I told you on the phone, we received information today that a marmoset, inoculated with BSE four years ago, had on post-mortem examination shown signs of spongiform change in its brain. The Minister will recall that a marmoset inoculated with scrapie at the same time succumbed in September. At first sight this is not particularly surprising and has no implication for human or animal health. Nevertheless we have agreed with DoH that it would make sense to call together members of the Tyrrell Committee as quickly as possible to consider the matter, and in the light of their advice we can consider with DoH how to put the information into the public domain.

2. The research work which has produced this finding is being conducted for the Medical Research Council, but there is no reason to believe that the story will break prematurely. If it does, enquiries ought to be directed to the DoH. The line that they will take will be that on the face of it such a result would not be surprising, but that it is nevertheless intended to consult independent experts as quickly as possible.

RL

Robert Lowson  
14 February 1992

Mr Rossington

(typed by the Minister's  
office for Mr Lowson)

- cc: PS/Mr Maclean
- PS/Perm Sec)
- Mr Capstick
- Mr Dugdale
- Mr Haddon

*Put to the Minister on Friday evening. Please copy to  
CVO, Mr K Taylor, Mr Harbin, Mr Wells (CVO) & return  
RL*