

A REVIEW: BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY ASSOCIATED WITH PRNP GENE POLYMORPHISMS

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Abstract

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is a chronic, degenerative disease that affects the central nervous system of cattle, the condition being known as "mad cow disease." BSE is part of the family of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). The main characteristics of TSEs refer to: a) very long incubation period, months or even years; b) progressive neurological disease, often fatal; (c) brain tissue from infected animals showed fibrils associated with scrapie; (d) pathological changes occur only in the central nervous system. Another disease in the EST category is scrapie, which was initially thought to be specific to sheep and does not affect humans, although it was known to be an infectious agent. As there was no other known spongiform encephalopathy at the time of the onset of BSE, it was considered to be derived from scraps, especially given that sheep meat was often served to cows to increase milk production.

Keywords: BSE; cattle; TSE, prions, CJD.
