

## BSE testing of cattle

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### This guidance is for England

Livestock keepers must be aware of the sampling requirements for the purposes of monitoring bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle. Livestock keepers must ensure that fallen cattle requiring BSE testing are disposed of to an approved BSE sampling site.

Subject to exceptions based on age and country of birth, all cattle that die or are slaughtered on-farm or in transit (other than for human consumption) are required to be tested for BSE.

Farmers are required to contact an approved collector within 24 hours of death to arrange delivery of the carcase to an approved sampling site within a further 48 hours. These cattle deaths must be recorded in the holding register within seven days, notified to the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) within seven days and the cattle passports returned to BCMS, also within seven days.

Cattle keepers are responsible for the correct disposal of cattle aged under 48 months (or 24 months if appropriate) at time of death. They do not require BSE testing and can be sent to any suitable approved animal by-products premises - for example, knacker's yard or via the National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo) in accordance with animal by-products legislation (see 'Fallen stock and the disposal of animal by-products').

### BSE testing requirements and responsibilities

All fallen cattle that die or are slaughtered on-farm or in transit (other than for human consumption) must be tested for BSE if they are over:

- 48 months old
- 24 months old if born in Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia or any non-EU country

The carcasses are the responsibility of the cattle keeper and must be sent to an approved sampling site.

Cattle keepers do not need to contact the TSE surveillance helpline. They must contact a collector within

24 hours of death to arrange delivery to an approved sampling site, or deliver the carcase themselves, in which case they should contact an approved sampling site to agree this within 24 hours, and must deliver the carcase within a further 48 hours.

Contact your normal collector or the NFSCo on 01335 320014. Government support is available via NFSCo.

Collectors must deliver these carcasses to an approved sampling site within 48 hours of agreeing to provide a collection service or of a carcase coming into their possession, whichever is the sooner.

## **Cattle born before 1 August 1996**

Cattle born before 1 August 1996 in the UK do not have passports, only certificates of registration, and they may not be slaughtered for human consumption. All cattle of this age have been restricted under the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (England) Regulations 2018 to the premises where they were located due to the consequent TSE risk.

Keepers of these cattle have been issued with restriction notices detailing the affected animals. Keepers wishing to move such animals must submit a movement licence application form, completed by both parties involved in the movement, to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) One Health Customer Service Centre in Worcester. Further information can be found in the cattle without passports section of the GOV.UK website.

## **Record keeping**

All deaths on holdings must be recorded in the holding register within seven days of the death, together with the:

- date the carcase was removed
- description of the carcase, including the ear tag number
- destination
- name of the haulier

The keeper must also notify BCMS of the death within seven days by one of the following methods:

- CTS Online (Cattle Tracing System)
- CTS Web Services from some farm software packages
- CTS self-service phone line (0345 011 1212)
- completing the death details in the animal's passport and/or registration certificate and returning it to BCMS

The only exception to this is where a beast is slaughtered outside a slaughterhouse but is sent to a slaughterhouse for dressing. In these cases, the keeper must complete the death details in the passport and send it with the carcase to the slaughterhouse. The occupier of the slaughterhouse must then notify BCMS of the death of the animal and return the passport with seven days of death.

Whichever method of notifying BCMS of a death is chosen, the cattle passport must be returned to BCMS within seven days.

An animal by-product commercial document must also be completed and retained (see 'Fallen stock and the disposal of animal by-products').

## Age limits

Most healthy cattle slaughtered in an abattoir for human consumption do not need to be BSE tested. However, the following cattle must still be tested for BSE:

- fallen cattle (see '**BSE testing requirements and responsibilities**' above)
- healthy cattle aged over 30 months, slaughtered for human consumption, that were born in Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and all non-EU countries
- cattle sent for emergency slaughter and cattle that are identified as sick at ante-mortem inspection if appropriate (aged over 48 months if born in the EU except Bulgaria, Romania or Croatia; aged over 24 months if born outside the EU or in Bulgaria, Romania or Croatia)

## Penalties

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

## Key legislation

Cattle Identification Regulations 2007

Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (England) Regulations 2018

Last reviewed / updated: August 2020

## In this update

No major changes

## Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to legislation can be found on each link's 'More Resources' tab.

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