

Veterinary Branch – Operational Delivery Division

Pilgrim House, Old Ford Road
Aberdeen, AB11 5RL

operations@fss.scot

Date: 21/11/2025

Dear Food Business Operators

Recognition of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Negligible Risk (NR) Status by EU

This letter is to inform you that the European Union (EU) has recognised Scotland, England and Wales as having Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Negligible Risk (NR) status, and to outline the implications for Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Official Controls (OC) and trade activities.

On 29 May 2025, Scotland, England and Wales were granted BSE NR status by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), having previously had a controlled risk (CR) status. Northern Ireland (NI) achieved NR in 2017.

This changed the definition of Specified Risk Material (SRM) for bovine animals that originated in these countries, with some tissues no longer designated as SRM, hence not required to be disposed as category 1 animal by-product (ABP) under domestic legislation.

The EU has now formally recognised Scotland, England and Wales as having BSE NR status. [Commission Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2025/2208](#), amending the Annex to Commission Decision 2007/453/EC as regards the BSE status of certain regions of the United Kingdom, was published on the 4 November 2025 and will become legally binding from the **24 November 2025**.

SRM definition for CR, undetermined risk, and NR countries can be found in Regulation (EC) No 999/2001, Annex V, Division 1 and 2 and are also included in [Annex 1 below](#).

Please note there are no changes to the SRM definition in sheep and goats.

From 24 November, FBOs will still be required to remove and dispose as SRM the skull (excluding the mandible), brain, eyes and spinal cord of bovines over 12 months of age. Other tissues no longer defined as SRM under NR status can be disposed as ABP Category 2 or 3, or, when harvested hygienically, be sold for human consumption (with the exception of the tonsils, which require removal under Regulation 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter IV, paragraph 16 (a)).

Animals originating from regions or countries that are not recognised as having BSE NR status (such as Isle of Man, Guernsey or Greece) would still require the removal of SRM as defined for a country listed as BSE controlled or undetermined BSE risk status and identify any over 30 months (OTM) bovine carcasses, half carcasses or quarters with a red striped label. OTM carcasses, half carcasses or quarters will need to be sent to cutting establishments authorised to remove SRM vertebral column.

The verification in cutting plants of the removal of VC from OTM bovines that were born, raised and slaughtered in England, Scotland or Wales is no longer needed.

However, the need to dispatch OTM carcasses to an authorised cutting plant for the removal of the vertebral column (VC) is still a legal requirement for bovines originating from territories such as Greece, the Isle of Man, Guernsey or any other territories with controlled or undetermined BSE risk. FSS supervision of these sites is still to be provided to ensure effective SRM removal.

FBOs will need to update their current standard operating procedures (SOPs) and HACCP based procedures accordingly, before they can implement any changes to their operations and / or products, and ensure requirements for the territories mentioned above (territories under CR or undetermined risk) are adequately reflected.

Annex 1 – SRM definition for animals originating from a country or region with a controlled risk (CR) or negligible (NR) BSE risk:

Tissues designated as SRM (Regulation 999/2001, Annex V, 1 (a) & 2)	CR status	NR status
Skull, brain and eyes (excluding the mandible) of bovines over 12m of age	SRM	SRM
Spinal cord of bovines over 12 months	SRM	SRM
Vertebral column (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the spinous and transverse processes of the cervical, thoracic and lumbar vertebrae and the median sacral crest and wings of the sacrum, but including the dorsal root ganglia, or bovines over 30 months)	SRM	NOT SRM
Tonsils of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Mesentery including mesenteric fat, mesenteric ganglion complex and mesenteric nerves of bovines of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Caecum of all ages	SRM	NOT SRM
Last 4m of the small intestine of bovines of all ages (small intestine comprises of duodenum, jejunum and ileum)	SRM	NOT SRM

Yours sincerely

Miriam Diaz Galvan
Head Veterinarian