

## Information Resources on Mad Cow Disease

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Searching for information on Mad Cow Disease on the Internet? Libraries in Alberta have found some helpful links for you. For more resources on this topic, contact your local library. To find Alberta libraries near you, visit <http://visityourlibrary.net/where.html>.

### What is BSE?

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is a disease in cattle that has been implicated in the development of the human version of mad cow disease, called variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD). It is part of a larger family of diseases known as Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE). Other TSEs include Scrapie in sheep, Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and elk, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans. The specific cause of these diseases is not known but they are associated with a build up of an abnormal form of protein called a prion.

"Alberta beef and dairy products are safe for consumption. Alberta's food safety system is among the best in the world. Detection of this case of BSE is proof of the effectiveness of our surveillance and monitoring systems. In addition, the majority of beef in Alberta comes from animals slaughtered under the age of 20 months. Since BSE has a long incubation period, approximately 4-6 years, young animals are at very low risk of having detectable prions in their brain."

([http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv6617?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv6617?opendocument))

### Keywords for further searching:

Many of our recommended sites allow for further searching of their information. You can use the following terms to find more information:

- BSE
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
- vCJD or CJD
- (variant) Creutzfeldt-Jakob or Creutzfeldt-Jakob
- Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy or TSE
- prion

### BSE Resources on the Web

New Scientist Magazine

For the latest scientific news in an easy to read format. Includes pages on history and a search for a cure.

<http://www.newscientist.com/hottopics/bse/>

Health Canada:

Includes fact sheets on BSE and CJD along with links to the government investigation into BSE in Western Canada.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/bse/index.html>

vCJD FAQ: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/cjd/bg2.html>

BSE FAQ: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/bse/faq.html>

Information on the first Canadian case of vCJD: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/cjd/index.html>

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

BSE Information Page: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv6617](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv6617)

Or call the Ag-Info Centre at 1-866-882-7677 (toll free in Alberta).

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Government of Canada

Information on BSE in North America

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/bseesb/bseesbindexe.shtml>

World Health Organization Fact Sheet on BSE

This page includes information Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (BSE and vCJD). The bottom of the page includes background on the WHO's research and conclusions on BSE.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs113/en/>

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Excellent resource for both BSE and vCJD in the United States. Includes updated news and articles as well as fact sheets on the left-hand side.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/cjd/cjd.htm>

### **Economic Aspects**

Statistics Canada Daily

Search on "BSE" and the other keywords listed above for the latest economic impact information.

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/dai-quo/>

### **Health Aspects**

Health Canada Frequently Asked Questions. Includes information on health risks to humans.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/bse/faq.html>

Includes background on the investigation in Alberta and information on the single case of vCJD in Canada.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/bse/index.html>

World Health Organization

[http://www.who.int/health\\_topics/encephalopathy\\_bovine\\_spongiform/en/](http://www.who.int/health_topics/encephalopathy_bovine_spongiform/en/)

### **Industry News**

Alberta Beef Producers

Includes daily news updates.

<http://www.albertabeef.org/01news/bse30520.html>

Canadian Cattlemen's Association

<http://www.cattle.ca/>

### **Worldwide**

Office International des Epizooties

An intergovernmental organization that reports animal diseases in each government's territories. Includes a map of all reported cases of BSE since 1989.

[http://www.oie.int/eng/info/en\\_esb.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/info/en_esb.htm)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Search on "BSE" and the other keywords listed above for health reports and more from around the world. Search box is on the top right-hand side of the page.

<http://www.fao.org>

Report on BSE including a history of the outbreak in the United Kingdom.

<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/004/Y2038E.HTM>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Includes a chronology of the single BSE case in the United States.

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/bse.html>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Includes a mix of consumer and industry level information sources and links to other government departments.

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bse.html>