

MIDDAY EXPRESS

News from the Press and Communication Directorate General's midday briefing

Nouvelles du rendez-vous de midi de la Direction Général Presse et Communication

Commission approves new BSE tests, opening up competition in the field

The European Commission today approved seven new rapid BSE tests : CediTect BSE test, Enfer TSE Kit version 2.0, IDEXX HerdChek BSE Antigen Test Kit (EIA), Institut Pourquier Speed'it BSE, Prionics Check PrioSTRIP, Roboscreen Beta Prion BSE EIA Test Kit, Roche Applied Science PrionScreen.

This means that there are now a total of 12 tests that can be used to monitor BSE, which considerably opens up competition in this field. Following a laboratory evaluation carried out by the Commission and subsequent field trials carried out by the test producers under the supervision of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recommended that the seven new tests should be approved for use. The tests are designed to detect BSE in brain material collected from animals at the slaughterhouse or which have died on the farm.

Until now, tests designed to detect BSE in live animals have not been evaluated. In the EU all healthy bovine cattle slaughtered at an age above 30 months and all fallen stock above 24 months have to be tested for BSE, with some derogations for some countries. The five previously approved tests can also be used to check for TSE in sheep and goats. Formal evaluations of additional tests for this purpose are ongoing.

For more information concerning BSE/TSE visit :

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biosafety/bse/index_en.htm