

BSE Surveillance Testing

IT'S ABOUT MAINTAINING CONFIDENCE



1-866-400-4244



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Canada

How will producers benefit from increased BSE testing?

Testing benefits producers and the broader cattle industry because domestic and international confidence in Canada's regulatory system translates to confidence in Canadian products.

What animals should be tested?

To maintain consumer confidence and assure trading partners, we need to look for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the right places - by testing higher-risk animals - the "4-Ds": down, diseased, dying and dead cattle over the age of 30 months.

Surveillance testing is not a food safety measure; the removal of specified risk material (SRM) from the food supply is the single most effective measure in place to protect consumers from BSE. This has been a legal requirement in Canada since the summer of 2003.





Who is doing the testing and how many samples does Canada have to test?

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is working in partnership with producers, industry, veterinary practitioners and provinces/territories to increase the intensity of BSE surveillance testing. This year, Canada needs to test a minimum of 8,000 cattle. We will continue to ramp up testing in the following years to achieve a minimum of 30,000 tested cattle per year.

Will there be any financial help for producers to help offset the costs associated with submitting samples to the CFIA?

Yes. The CFIA is providing financial support to offset the costs of veterinary examinations and carcass disposal (on farm or deadstock collection). More information on the reimbursement program is available by contacting the CFIA locally. You can also call the CFIA at 1-866-400-4244.



Canadians trust their cattle producers. Throughout the BSE crisis consumers have shown confidence in beef products because they trust Canada's safeguards.

What if we don't meet our surveillance targets?

If we fail to test enough animals, it will affect our ability to claim that we are a minimal risk country. Many of our trading partners could categorize Canada as a higher risk country. This would affect our ability to export.

Is it likely we will find more cases of BSE in Canada?

Animal disease experts from Canada and other countries have maintained that there may be additional cases in this part of the world. Indeed, given the collective international experience, it's reasonable to expect that increased surveillance will lead to some additional North American cases being found.



Won't finding more cases of BSE in Canada close our existing markets or delay opening others?

There is recognition at the international level that Canada has acted responsively and proactively to limit the spread of BSE. Based on accepted international BSE guidelines, Canada can detect additional cases of BSE without suffering additional trade restrictions.

What's important to remember is that, while there are no guarantees that finding additional cases will not generate negative reactions from some trading partners, not reaching our surveillance targets will most certainly keep some borders from re-opening.

Won't confidence in the beef supply be weakened if additional cases are found?

Following the detection of BSE in Canada, and subsequently in the U.S., confidence stayed high and consumers actually increased their consumption of beef. Public health was protected through the removal of SRM.

Finding additional cases will more likely affect beef consumption if efforts are not being made to find or control the disease. This is why it is so important that Canada meet its surveillance targets. Not looking for BSE could have a greater impact on consumer confidence than detecting additional cases of BSE.



Would future investigations put my entire herd at risk of depopulation?

Future investigations would target only animals of equivalent risk to the affected animal. This includes the most recent born offspring of an infected animal and animals in the birth herd born within a year of the affected animal.

It may also be possible, with accurate animal records and identification, to delay the destruction of animals of genetic value to a producer for as long as they remain productive, until they either die or are slaughtered.

**Maintaining confidence is a partnership.
The success of Canada's BSE surveillance program hinges
on the partnership of governments, the veterinary profession,
and the cattle industry.**



For more information on the CFIA's surveillance testing program please visit:

www.inspection.gc.ca/bse_test

If Canada's surveillance program is to fulfill the expectations of consumers and trading partners, it requires the co-operation and participation of cattle producers and industry to achieve a sufficient number of samples. The responsibility to strengthen the cattle industry rests on each farm, with industry and within the national animal health community across Canada.

To report an animal for testing call your private veterinarian or a CFIA district veterinarian. You can also call the CFIA at **1-866-400-4244** during business hours.

