

	The BSE Inquiry: The Report
	The Inquiry into BSE and variant CJD in the United Kingdom
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Volume 1 Findings and Conclusions

Executive Summary of the Report of the Inquiry

5. Communication of the risk posed by BSE to humans

- The increasing knowledge about BSE over the years, which threw doubt on the theory that it would behave like scrapie, was not concealed from the public. However, the public was not informed of any change in the perceived likelihood that BSE might be transmissible to humans.
- The public was repeatedly reassured that it was safe to eat beef. Some statements failed to explain that the views expressed were subject to proper observance of the precautionary measures which had been introduced to protect human health against the possibility that BSE might be transmissible. These statements conveyed the message not merely that beef was safe but that BSE was not transmissible.
- The impression thus given to the public that BSE was not transmissible to humans was a significant factor leading to the public feeling of betrayal when it was announced on 20 March 1996 that BSE was likely to have been transmitted to people.

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