

## LiteratureWatch

# Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy and Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

**B**OVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE), also known as mad cow disease, has received much attention in the last few years, and considerable press recently. On December 23, 2003, a cow positive for BSE was discovered in Washington state. A few months earlier (May 20, 2003), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported a case of BSE in a beef cow in northern Alberta, Canada. Thus, a condition that up until now was primarily restricted to the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, in other European Union countries has made its way to North America. Strong evidence indicates that BSE has been transmitted to humans, primarily in the United Kingdom, causing a variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), a rare, degenerative, invariably fatal brain disorder.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has implemented several new public health measures to be implemented by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to strengthen the existing firewalls that protect Americans from exposure to the agent thought to cause BSE and to prevent the spread of BSE in U.S. cattle.

The following is a bibliography of peer-reviewed papers published in the last two years on BSE and vCJD. In addition, the following websites are excellent sources to obtain up-to-date information on this hot topic: USDA website ([www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/bse.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/bse.html)), FDA website ([www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2003/NEW00999.html](http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2003/NEW00999.html)), CDC website ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/cjd/cjd.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/cjd/cjd.htm)), and NIH website ([www.ninds.nih.gov/health\\_and\\_medical/disorders/cjd.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/cjd.htm)).

We hope that this information is useful to our readers.

—Stephen P. Oliver  
Editor-in-Chief  
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