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# Case of mad cow disease confirmed on Somerset farm

Millions of cattle were culled in the UK in the 1990s during a BSE epidemic.



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By [Tom Pilgrim](#) | 17 September 2021

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**A** single case of classical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), an infection commonly known as mad cow disease – has been confirmed on a farm in Somerset

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (Apha) said the infected animal was dead and had been removed from the farm.

It said there was “no risk to food safety”, adding that “precautionary movement restrictions” were in place to stop the movement of livestock in the area while “further investigations continue to identify the origin of the disease”.

Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said the deceased animal was tested as part of “TSE surveillance controls”.

She added: “This is further proof that our surveillance system for detecting and



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“We recognise this will be a traumatic time for the farmer and we are on hand to offer advice through this difficult period.

“The UK's overall risk status for BSE remains at ‘controlled’ and there is no risk to food safety or public health.”

Confirming the case on Friday, Apha said it will launch a “thorough investigation of the herd, the premises, potential sources of infection and will produce a full report on the incident in due course”.

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It added that there have been five cases of confirmed BSE in the UK since 2014, all of which have been in animals not destined for the human food chain and posed no risk to the general public.

A spokesperson for the [Food Standards Agency](#) said: “There are strict controls in place to protect consumers from the risk of BSE, including controls on animal feed, and removal of the parts of cattle most likely to carry BSE infectivity.

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“Consumers can be reassured that these important protection measures remain in place and that Food Standards Agency Official Veterinarians and Meat Hygiene Inspectors working in all abattoirs in England will continue to ensure that the safety of consumers remains the top priority.”

Millions of cattle were culled in the UK in the 1990s during a BSE epidemic.

Strict controls were introduced to protect consumers after it was linked to a fatal condition called variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans.

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