

**OIE Rates the United States as a "Controlled Risk" Country:
The BSE Risk in the US Still Remains High**

Consumers Union of Japan
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On May 20, 2007, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) classified the United States as a "Controlled Risk" country, together with Canada, Switzerland, Taiwan, Chile and Brazil. This rating was decided at the OIE general meeting based on each country's BSE status. As a result of this OIE rating, exports of US beef will become unrestricted after Specified Risk Material (SRM) is removed, even for beef from older US cattle. We are concerned that this will lead to a US demand for the easing of the beef export agreement with Japan's government.

Consumers Union of Japan is opposed to the latest result from the OIE scientific commission. The reason is that the US countermeasures for BSE remain insufficient.

a) In the United States, slaughter and meat processing are based on HACCP, but inspection is done by the private sector, and the public officials from the US Department of Agriculture only examine the documentation. As a result of this, there have been a large number of violations reported so far.

b) Specific Risk Material (SRM) will only be removed from cattle that is 30 months or older. There is also a possibility that abnormal prions are present in cattle that are 30 months or younger in circulation on the market.

c) Since production of meat and bone meal, as well as blood powder, for the purpose of making animal feed is approved, there is a possibility that cattle is eating cross-contaminated feed.

In the future relations between Japan and the United States, the US side may raise the issue of its OIE rating, and apply pressure on Japan to remove its import restrictions on US beef, such as the 20 month or less age limit and the condition that all SRM should be removed. Such demands should not be accepted by the Japanese government, as Japanese consumers continue to be opposed to the import of US beef.

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