

Poland reports case of 'mad cow disease'

February 4 2019

An atypical case of BSE—commonly dubbed "mad cow disease"—has been discovered in Poland, though the isolated case posed no risk to human health, Poland's chief veterinarian said on Monday.

"A case of the atypical form of BSE in Poland has been confirmed," Krzysztof Niemczuk said, quoted by the Polish PAP news agency.

"According to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE), BSE in its atypical form, as discovered in Poland, does not affect the status of Poland as a country with negligible BSE risk," he added.

The cow found to be carrying BSE in the village of Mirsk in southwestern Poland, an area bordering the Czech Republic and Germany, was put down, Niemczuk said.

The atypical strain of the disease was uncovered on January 24 during a routine screening, the OIE said in a separate statement.

It added that atypical BSE "appears spontaneously in all cattle populations at a very low frequency" and as such "has no impact on the official BSE risk assessment in Poland."

The discovery of BSE in British cows prompted the European Union to order a worldwide embargo on British beef and its derivatives in 1996 after it was learned that it can be transmitted to humans in the form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which can be deadly.

The embargo in Europe was lifted in 1999.

In a separate case, EU experts arrived in Poland on Monday to probe a suspect beef scare that saw a Polish slaughterhouse allegedly evade controls to butcher lame cows and export the meat to some 13 other European Union members.

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