

'Mad cow' disease case identified in Netherlands

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Dutch officials have identified a single case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly known as "mad cow disease", in a cow carcass, the agriculture ministry said Wednesday.

The animal, an eight-year-old cow, tested positive for an "atypical" variant which arises sporadically in animals and is believed to pose less risk to humans, it said.

It is the first such case in the Netherlands since 2011.

The infected cow "did not enter the food chain and did not pose a risk to food safety," Agriculture Minister Piet Adema said.

BSE is linked to the fatal human condition Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease if contaminated meat is ingested.

The atypical variant of BSE sporadically occurs in older cows, while the classic form is spread when farmers feed cattle with the meat and bone meal of dead and infected animals.

The classic form poses more danger to humans.

Dutch officials had sealed off the affected farm in the South Holland province, and were culling a calf as well as animals that spent their first year growing up with the infected cow.

"In total, 13 bovines have been traced and will now be culled and tested," for BSE, the ministry said in a statement.

Mad cow disease first appeared in Britain in the 1980s and spread to many countries in Europe and around the world, causing consumer alarm and triggering a crisis in the beef industry.

There have been 88 cases of classic BSE reported in the Netherlands since 1997 and four atypical cases.

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