

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

23 APRIL 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 273/96

SCHOOL MEALS - IMPACT OF BSE

ABSTRACT

This report outlines the action taken by the Council in consultation with Tayside Contracts in relation to BSE.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- i) note the action taken in respect of beef and beef products;
- ii) instruct the Director of Education to keep the matter under review and report back to Committee in the light of any further developments..

2 BACKGROUND

Members will be aware there has been considerable concern expressed by parents and the general public regarding the possibility of contracting Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (CJD) through exposure to beef or beef products containing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

A letter from the Scottish Office of 27 March 1996 stated "There is no reason for the Government to advise local education authorities to withdraw beef from school meals." The letter stressed that any BSE related risk from eating beef or beef products is likely to be extremely small and highlighted the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) view that if human infection occurs infants and children are not likely to be more susceptible to that infection than are adults.

For several months parents in Angus have been given the opportunity to ask that their children have beef-free menus.

3 ACTION TAKEN BY DEPARTMENT

The concerns which have been raised relate to the use of older cattle in manufactured "beef products".

To ensure any risk is minimised the department, in consultation with Tayside Contracts, has taken the following action:

- i) in very small schools where there is no choice on menus, beef products have been removed;
- ii) suppliers of beef have provided a guarantee to ensure only young cattle under 30 months of age are used, and that the source of the cattle can be traced back to the farm;
- iii) similarly, manufacturers of beef products have been asked to provide assurances over the source of supply. Where this has not been possible the products concerned have been removed from the menu and replaced with other items.

4 CONSULTATION

The Directors of Law & Administration and Environmental & Consumer Protection and the Chief Executive have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

JIM ANDERSON
Director of Education

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.