

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Surveillance

The USDA has conducted surveillance for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) since 1990. In 2004, following the December 2003 detection of BSE in an imported cow, USDA implemented an enhanced BSE surveillance program to determine more accurately the prevalence of the disease in the U.S. cattle population.

USDA concluded that the prevalence of BSE in the United States is extremely low (less than 1 case per million adult cattle), and in 2006, transitioned to an ongoing BSE surveillance program that tests at a level more commensurate with this extremely low level of risk. Ongoing BSE surveillance exceeds guidelines set forth by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), providing for testing at a level 10 times that which is recommended by OIE.

Personnel in [BSE-approved NAHLN laboratories](#) have provided BSE surveillance testing since 2004. These laboratories continue to conduct testing to detect BSE at the very low level of less than 1 case per million adult cattle, assess any change in the BSE status of U.S. cattle, and identify any rise in BSE prevalence in this country. The NVSL Pathobiology Laboratory in Ames, Iowa performs surveillance and confirmatory testing on all samples identified as suspect (potential positive) for BSE by the NAHLN laboratories.

Click [here](#) for more information on VS' involvement in BSE.