

BSE

JP Deslys, et al. Nature. (2001) Vol. 409 6819, 476-7

Evaluation of testing methods in screening slaughtered cattle for evidence of BSE. The methods examined aim to detect PrP^{res} (an abnormal prion protein in BSE affected cattle) using a commercial Bio-Rad ELISA test, and the standard mouse bioassay.

The limit of detection for the commercial test appears to be equal to that of the standard mouse assay. The authors suggest that the commercial test could be used instead of the standard mouse assay (which takes months to show clear results).

Comment

Commercial test appears easier to test for PrP^{res}. However full analysis of factors such as specificity and sensitivity not available. The EU were co-authors, so test could become 'allowable'. This may create more pressure to test for BSE within the EU. However it is debatable how much effect this would have in this country.

Cost effectiveness cannot be estimated without specificity and sensitivity data.

