

## **WTO Workshop on Risk Analysis, Geneva, 13-14 October 2014**

### **Targeting risk communication: the Brazilian Experience**

Brazil notified its first case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) on 7th December 2012, right after the confirmation of the diagnosis by the OIE International Reference Laboratory in Weybridge, United Kingdom (AHVLA). The reporting protocol followed the procedures set down in the Brazilian BSE Occurrence Manual, which was included in the dossier presented to the OIE when the country was classified as being of negligible risk for the disease.

The BSE case registered in Brazil refers to one native cow raised for breeding purposes. The cow died at approximately 13 years of age and was raised throughout its productive life on pasture and mineral supplements. The animal died less than 24 hours after the daily survey of the animals and its carcass was duly buried in a deep ditch in the same premises where it died. This animal did not therefore represent any risk of contamination to the food or feed chain.

As one of the risk communication strategy elements, the Brazilian Government established a specific office to deal with the issue (Crisis Office). This Office comprised representatives of the Vice-Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Office (coordination), Social Communication Advice Office, Ministry of External Relations, Secretariat of Agribusiness International Relations and Secretariat of Animal and Plant Health and Inspection. Among other duties, the Crisis Office coordinated all risk communication actions developed with the national and international media, Brazilian consumers and International Organizations.

On December 19th 2012 the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the WTO held a Plurilateral meeting with the participation of the Brazilian Vice-Minister of Agriculture and the CVO. Representatives from 20 countries, the SPS Committee Secretary and Chairperson were present. During the event the BSE case was presented in detail and discussed.

On 15 March 2013, Brazil circulated document G/SPS/GEN/1232 communicating the final report of the BSE case in Brazil to the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee). This document was presented during the 56th SPS Committee Meeting.

This experience clearly shows the importance of risk communication as a strong tool in sanitary cases. Brazil has around 142 markets for beef representing 19.6% of the total production. Additional sanitary measures were established by only 17 countries. The national beef demand did not decrease and there was no reduction of national beef consumption. It is also important to highlight that the OIE maintained the BSE Negligible Risk Status for Brazil.