

Diagnostic methods

Following a positive rapid screening test result (Idexx HerdCheck BSE-Scrapie Enzyme Immunoassay), the sample material and the corresponding whole brain were forwarded to Ireland's National Reference Laboratory (NRL) where samples from the medulla oblongata at the level of the obex and other anatomical areas (caudal medulla, rostral medulla, midbrain, thalamus, cerebral cortex, cervical spinal cord) were subjected to testing using a World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)-approved immunoblot method (Biorad TeSeE Western Blot). In accordance with NRL protocols and OIE confirmatory testing methods for BSE, samples of the medulla were then subjected to histopathological examination and immunohistochemistry. In addition, duplicate samples were also forwarded to the European Union (EU) Reference Laboratory in Weybridge, United Kingdom, for confirmation. In addition, the samples were subjected to a two-blot protocol (APHA BioRad-based method) for the classification of BSE isolates, using antibodies Sha31 and P4, in accordance with EU Regulation 999/2001 (article 3.1c of Chapter A, Annex X).