

# European Union proposes measures to stop mad cow disease outbreak

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — With cases of mad cow disease cropping up across Europe, the European Union proposed a slate of new measures Wednesday to try to eradicate the lethal brain-wasting disease and stem a public health scare over beef. The union's executive commission proposed an EU-wide ban on animal products in fodder for cows,

pigs and poultry for six months starting Jan. 1 and the testing of hundreds of thousands of older cattle. The steps are part of an attempt to launch a Europe-wide strategy to stop mad cow disease from spreading to humans. Two people in France and 80 in Britain have died from the human form of the disease; 89 people across the EU have been infected.

Mad cow disease "is now moving from one member state to another," EU Health Commissioner, said David Byrne. "We should adopt an overall approach to address the risks so consumers can see what is done to protect their health." The latest scare over mad cow disease was sparked by the discovery of infected cows in France, along with

a recorded case of its human form. Since then, scientists have found the first cattle with the disease in Germany and Spain. That triggered bans of French beef imports in several EU countries, as well as in East European nations, which have banned imports from EU members with reported cases of mad cow disease.

Agriculture ministers from the 15-nation bloc were expected to approve the temporary fodder ban on Monday along with other recommendations. Last week, they agreed in principle to more testing of cattle of 30 months and older. Some half a million cattle could be tested in the first six months of 2001 under the proposal, officials

said. After that, the EU would decide whether to continue the testing. Mad cow disease — known as bovine spongiform encephalitis or BSE — is thought to be transmitted when cattle eat fodder made from ground parts of infected animals. It is thought to cause variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans if they eat from infected animals is eaten.



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