

 animalhealth  
AUSTRALIA



**BUCKS  
FOR BRAINS**

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# ABOUT BUCKS FOR BRAINS

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The *Bucks for Brains* initiative provides generous incentive payments for producers who submit eligible sheep and cattle brains for national testing. In doing so, they will help Australia maintain market access for its livestock industries.

*Bucks for Brains* is an initiative of the National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Surveillance Project (NTSESP) which is tasked with confirming Australia's proof of freedom from TSEs.

## WHAT ARE TSEs?

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TSEs are rare, fatal diseases that cause gradual deterioration in the brain and other central nervous system tissues.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as 'Mad Cow' disease, is the form seen in cattle, while scrapie is the form seen in sheep.



Image credit: iStock

# NATIONAL TSE SURVEILLANCE PROJECT

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The NTSESP helps Australia meet guidelines set by the World Organisation for Animal Health to demonstrate Australia's freedom from BSE and scrapie. In order to meet these guidelines, Australia must continue to collect, examine and test eligible cattle and sheep samples.

The clinical signs of BSE and scrapie can also be common to many other diseases and this is the reason specific testing is required.

## INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

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By submitting your eligible animals, through your veterinarian or regional animal health officer, you will receive \$300 for cattle samples and \$100 for sheep samples. The incentive payment is for a maximum of two animals per veterinary investigation.

Veterinarians also receive a separate incentive payment to cover the cost of all laboratory fees and subsidise the cost of freighting samples to accredited laboratories.

As veterinarian costs are reduced for testing, producers may be able to have the actual illness diagnosed at a reduced cost.

# ELIGIBLE SHEEP

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Eligible sheep must:

- be no less than 18 months of age
- preferably be no older than five years of age
- display signs consistent with scrapie.

## Clinical signs can include:

- changes in temperament
- mild behavioural and neurological signs
- apprehension
- loss of wool on flank and hind quarters
- rubbing or scratching
- poor coordination (circling, staggering and falling)
- muscle tremors
- abnormal posture (abnormal head carriage)
- difficulty in rising
- paralysis
- agitation.



# CATTLE

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Eligible cattle must:

- be older than 30 months
- be less than nine years
- display signs consistent with BSE.

## Clinical signs can include:

- changes in behaviour and neurological signs
- excessive licking of the nose and flanks
- poor coordination (circling, staggering and falling)
- muscle tremors
- abnormal posture (abnormal ear position and abnormal head carriage)
- difficulty in rising (downer)
- paralysis
- excitability
- increased or decreased sensitivity to sound, pain, heat, cold or touch.

**If you have cattle or sheep displaying any of these signs, contact your veterinarian or your state/territory government animal health officer to see if you are eligible for an incentive payment.**



# FURTHER INFORMATION

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Visit the Animal Health Australia  
website at:  
[www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au)



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