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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Scientific perspective needed on latest BSE development**

Guelph, ON -- A lack of understanding of the science behind regulation, is confusing the discussion around food safety and control of the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), according to a new report from the George Morris Centre.

“With the latest case of BSE in Canada, public discussion appears to have taken a more desperate tone, with exaggerated reports of feed contamination with animal byproducts and other misinformation surrounding this issue,” says Al Mussell, Senior Research Associate at the Centre. “Much of this discussion is irrelevant - the implications of the science on BSE are actually quite straightforward.”

The most accepted body of scientific knowledge about BSE finds that the infectious agent (the prion) that spreads BSE in cattle is only found in the nervous system and very specific lymphoid tissues.. Canada has taken several measures to ensure that these cattle tissues designated as Specified Risk Materials (SRMs) are removed from the food and feed system to safeguard human and animal health. “Because scientific evidence confirms that the prion only exists in the SRMs in cattle, BSE control begins and ends with the removal and destruction of the SRMs.”

Larry Martin, George Morris Centre CEO, and co-author of the report says, “The Canadian regulatory response actually goes beyond what the best scientific evidence would warrant by addressing broader issues than the SRMs. These built-in redundancies represent safeguard measures in eradicating BSE.”

The George Morris Centre is issuing a special report on this topic to provide some perspective in interpreting recent events and to clarify current discussions by outlining the science of BSE and its logical implications. “All sides in the discussion of BSE control measures claim that the best science should be used as the basis for appropriate regulation. Yet, some comments on Canada’s regulatory measures demonstrate that not everyone understands the implications of the science in regulation. If we are to avoid muddled deliberations, the logic of regulation and the science behind it needs to be clarified.”

The George Morris Centre is a national, not-for-profit think-tank specializing in the Canadian agri-food sector. The Centre provides perspective, critical information, strategic analysis and planning, and education on issues affecting the sector to promote its environmental and economic sustainability.

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Full report available on the George Morris Centre website at: [www.georgemorris.org](http://www.georgemorris.org)  
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