

# Workshop on BSE and vCJD Risks in North America:

## Workshop Summary

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Pan American Health Organization  
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# Jarbas Barbosa

## Pan American Health Organization

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- PAHO has held a number of consultations on BSE in the Americas
- Focus on strengthening surveillance and collaborative laboratory capacity
- Eight countries classified as lowest level of risk; other countries still need to conduct BSE risk analysis



# Neil Cashman

## University of British Columbia

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- PrioNet Canada established in 2005 in response to Canada's BSE crisis
- The Network of Centres of Excellence involve:
  - 60 principal investigators
  - 150 graduate students
  - 250+ attendees at the annual meeting
- Mission is to develop risk management strategies for prion diseases, including BSE and vCJD
- International collaboration essential to success



# Daniel Krewski

## University of Ottawa

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- Risk depends on both the probability and consequences of an adverse event
- McLaughlin Centre has developed an integrated framework for risk management and population health
- Precautionary approach appropriate for BSE because of high consequences high uncertainty
- Risk-based decision making to consider cost-effective risk management
- Canada, which has had 14 cases of domestic BSE to date, has implemented all of major BSE risk controls, including an enhanced feed ban in 2007
- PrioNet Canada developing an integrated risk management framework for prion diseases



# Michael Tyshenko

## University of Ottawa

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- Case studies of over 30 countries and regions worldwide. Multi-country non-parametric signal event comparisons
- Factors affecting risk management action include:
  - Linkage of BSE to vCJD (1996)
  - Later peak of BSE epidemic in EU (2001)
  - Occurrence of domestic BSE
- Factors not affecting risk management action include:
  - BSE outbreak in the UK (1986)
- Non-BSE countries appeared to be no more precautionary than BSE-affected countries



# Louise Lemyre

## University of Ottawa

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- Risk perception an important component of risk management
- Focus group revealed limited understanding of BSE
- Perceived risk related to understanding and trust
- Canadian public perceives BSE as an economic risk more than a public health issue
- About half the population felt that the government is doing enough to manage BSE risks



# William Leiss

## University of Ottawa

- BSE arguably the most costly zoonotic disease to affect the world to date
- Canada has experienced the worst impacts of any country in the world (calculated on a cost per case basis)
- Policy challenges:
  - increase international collaboration
  - precautionary vs risk based management
  - alignment of market/regulatory policy
  - proactive approach: anticipate and prevent
- Background paper *“Managing Prion Disease Risks: A Canadian Perspective”* (comments welcome)



# Robert Clarke

## Public Health Agency of Canada

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- Public (mental) health role of zoonotic diseases such as BSE and avian flu not always recognized
- WHO and OIE have endorsed 'One Health' concept for zoonotic diseases
- "Foresight" program in the UK, which looks at risks that may occur one or two decades in the future, a useful model for preventive risk management
- Important to evaluate success of risk management decisions taken from a public health perspective – what criteria are most important for this purpose?



# John Clifford

## U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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- Risk communication (open, transparent, timely, clear) a critical success factor in the U.S.
- Need to standardize terminology, such as 'risk-based', particularly internationally
- BSE risk is extremely low in the U.S., but cannot be claimed to be zero
- USDA moving to a risk-based scientific approach, in the spirit of the OIE code



# Jorge Enrique Jiménez Rice

## Commission Mexico USA

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- BSE surveillance targeted at high risk animals
- Courses in Veterinary Medical Schools on recognition of foreign and emerging animal diseases
- Emergency plan for BSE outbreak in place in Mexico
- Mexico designated 'controlled risk' by OIE on May 30, 2008



# Paul Locke

## Panel Discussion on BSE Risk Management

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- What are strengths and weaknesses of the IRMF?
- How might the IRMF be used to enhance international collaboration?
- What are the public and animal health issues?
- What risk assessment and management techniques are most important for prion diseases?
- How types of knowledge translation activities might support prion risk management policy development?
- How might follow-up tripartite discussions advance prion risk management in North America?



# Noel Murray

## Canadian Food Inspection Agency

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- Problem definition is a strength of IRMF (includes consideration of socioeconomic impacts)
- Important to monitor prion disease risk profiles over time – what might we have done differently in the past with additional information?  
Stakeholder involvement and peer review important components of the IRMF
- New Zealand framework includes consideration of people, environment (very broadly defined to include community and social values), and the economy



# Ron DeHaven

## American Veterinary Medical Association

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- Time to move beyond 1983 U.S. NRC framework
- Identification of a lead agency a strength of the proposed IRMF
- Evaluation of psycho-social impacts a strength: cost per case cannot be justified without consideration of such impacts
- U.S. border closing could have been anticipated, and might have impacted risk management policy development in Canada
- Communication (part of the IRMF) is key: do not minimize risk when talking to the public (even though the risk is very small)
- When trust is lost (e.g., in South Korea), risk issues become more difficult to manage



# Dennis Laycraft

## Canadian Cattleman's Association

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- Strengths of the IRMF include consideration of both scientific and social factors; adopting an international approach; and its systematic and comprehensive nature
- Weakness include inadequate consideration of trade issues related to risk assessment and risk management
- Need to be careful in applying the precautionary principle not to induce non-tariff trade barriers
- Important to recognize that BSE is largely under control in most parts of the world
- Feed ban has been perhaps the most important risk management action



# Larry Schonberger

## U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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- All eight sections of the draft IRMF are timely and useful; specific strengths include consideration of risk perception (repeated surveys are potentially important), evolution of risk management, and identification of policy challenges
- Case studies useful, but should be carefully reviewed
- Knowledge of BSE outbreak was not the main policy driver – rather, link to vCJD a decade later was critical in this regard
- The IRMF does not pay enough attention to human prion diseases, including credible human disease surveillance
- There are also too few specific examples of ‘best practices’ derived from the country case studies

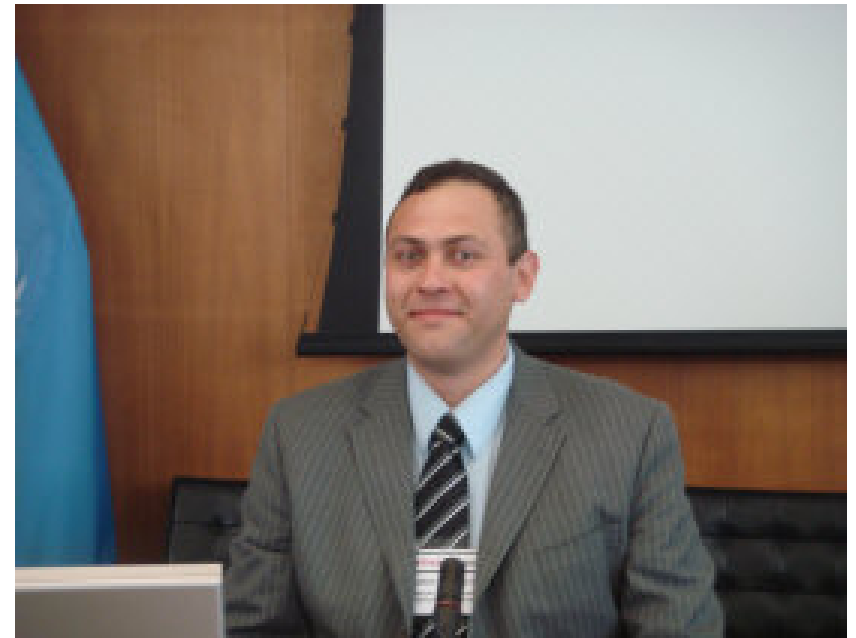


# Jorge Enrique Jiménez Rice

## Commission Mexico USA

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- IRMF should:
  - be compatible with OIE guidance
  - consider legal framework of involved countries
  - should give desired level of protection for individual countries
  - emphasize risk communication
- Future actions could include
  - international projections
  - harmonization
  - international information network
  - working groups on specific risk issues



# Will Hueston

## University of Minnesota

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- Recognition of psychosocial factors and their measurement a strength (the updated risk management framework itself a contribution)
- The iterative nature of risk management is not clearly represented in the IRMF
- Risk communications is understated, too much emphasis on one-way communications
- Engagement of potentially affected parties increases not only credibility, but the likelihood of compliance
- In reality, risk management cannot proceed in the absence of political factors
- Terminology (safe, risk) important to define
- Food security could be considered within the IRMF



*“The trouble with predictions is that they happen in the future.”*

# Chuck Lambert

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

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- Scientifically, BSE is no longer a public health issue, nor an animal health issue (proper implementation of known mitigation measures will control the disease)
- OIE useful in international trade: should implement international policies consistent with OIE guidelines
- Decline in BSE cases in Canada can be expected over the next few years
- BSE has attracted considerable media attention; risk messages are therefore particularly important
- Research on TSE's other than BSE should be a high priority
- May need to reconsider the 'zero tolerance' to protect against undue economic repercussions



# Next Steps

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- Workshop report summarizing today's discussions
- Workshop proceedings
- Comments on IRMF to be sent to [wleiss@uottawa.ca](mailto:wleiss@uottawa.ca)
- Follow-up discussions on prion disease risk management within North America
  - international information network?
  - working groups to address specific risk issues relating to prion disease?
  - training?
  - tripartite (Canada/US/Mexico) consultations?



# Related Events

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## **PrioNet Canada Annual Scientific Meeting**

**Edmonton, Alberta  
March 1-3, 2009**

**Contact:**

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# Thank You's!

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- PrioNet Canada
- NCE program
- PAHO
- Speakers
- Participants



# Adjourned!