Impact of the UK's BSE Risk Status Change on Isle of Man Cattle Trade February - March 2026

Background

In August 2024, the UK applied to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), to change their recognised BSE disease status from controlled to negligible risk. In May 2025, WOAH reclassified England, Wales and Scotland to 'negligible risk' for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The EU then approved the change in status through Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/2208**,** which came into effect from 24 November 2025**.**

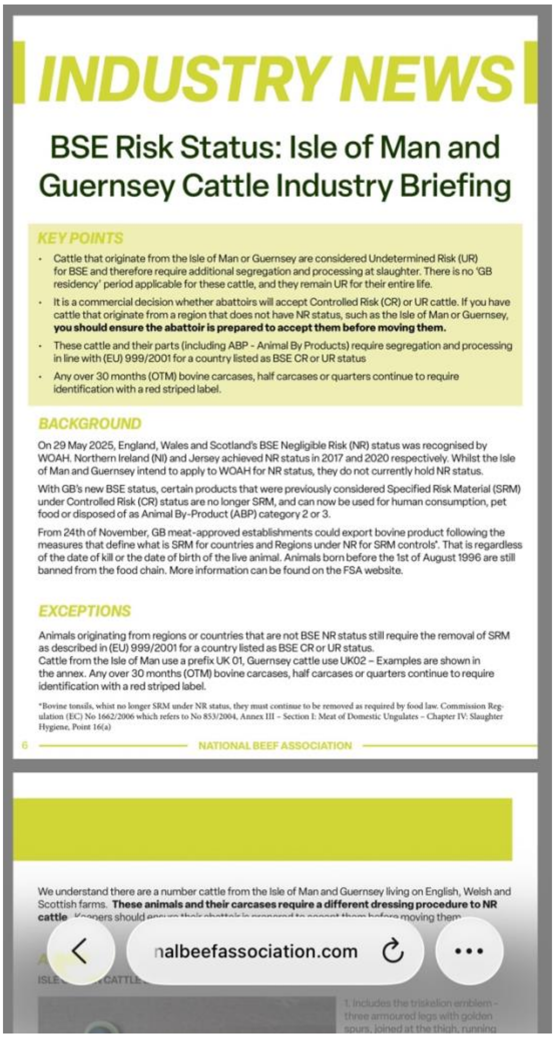
Neither the Isle of Man or Guernsey were considered in the application for recognised negligible-risk zones. As a result of this omission from the application, cattle originating from the Isle of Man must be treated by the UK supply chain as 'undetermined risk' for specified risk material (SRM) purposes (a).This is despite the Isle of Man having been clear of BSE for the longest period of time, with no case since 1999.

Table 1: Last confirmed cases of BSE in the UK and Crown Dependencies*

Jurisdiction	Most Recent Reported BSE Case	Notes
England	*September 2021* (Classical; Somerset)	Classical BSE: rare cases continue to be detected in surveillance.
Wales	*2015* (Classical)	Last widely referenced Welsh case prior to UK-level detections.
Scotland	*9 May 2024* (Classical)	Last confirmed classical BSE case in UK.
Republic of Ireland	*2015 (Classical) 2020 (Atypical)*	Last confirmed BSE case in ROI.
Northern Ireland	*2012*	Last reported BSE case in NI.
Isle of Man	*1999*	Last reported case on Island.
Jersey	*2002*	Last reported case on Island.
Guernsey	*2002*	Last reported case on Island.

*Data collected from British Veterinary Association, UK Government, Welsh Government, DAFM, ROI, DAERA N.I. Direct, www.gov.je (Jersey Government), BBC reporting, Isle of Man Government

Manx Agricultural Industry impact



INDUSTRY NEWS

BSE Risk Status: Isle of Man and Guernsey Cattle Industry Briefing

KEY POINTS

- Cattle that originate from the Isle of Man or Guernsey are considered Undetermined Risk (UR) for BSE and therefore require additional segregation and processing at slaughter. There is no 'GB residency' period applicable for these cattle, and they remain UR for their entire life.
- It is a commercial decision whether abattoirs will accept Controlled Risk (CR) or UR cattle. If you have cattle that originate from a region that does not have NR status, such as the Isle of Man or Guernsey, **you should ensure the abattoir is prepared to accept them before moving them.**
- These cattle and their parts (including ABP - Animal By Products) require segregation and processing in line with (EU) 999/2001 for a country listed as BSE CR or UR status
- Any over 30 months (OTM) bovine carcases, half carcases or quarters continue to require identification with a red striped label.

BACKGROUND

On 29 May 2025, England, Wales and Scotland's BSE Negligible Risk (NR) status was recognised by WOAH. Northern Ireland (NI) and Jersey achieved NR status in 2017 and 2020 respectively. Whilst the Isle of Man and Guernsey intend to apply to WOAH for NR status, they do not currently hold NR status.

With GB's new BSE status, certain products that were previously considered Specified Risk Material (SRM) under Controlled Risk (CR) status are no longer SRM, and can now be used for human consumption, pet food or disposed of as Animal By-Product (ABP) category 2 or 3.

From 24th of November, GB meat-approved establishments could export bovine product following the measures that define what is SRM for countries and Regions under NR for SRM controls*. That is regardless of the date of kill or the date of birth of the live animal. Animals born before the 1st of August 1996 are still banned from the food chain. More information can be found on the FSA website.

EXCEPTIONS

Animals originating from regions or countries that are not BSE NR status still require the removal of SRM as described in (EU) 999/2001 for a country listed as BSE CR or UR status.
Cattle from the Isle of Man use a prefix UK 01, Guernsey cattle use UK02 – Examples are shown in the annex. Any over 30 months (OTM) bovine carcases, half carcases or quarters continue to require identification with a red striped label.

*Bovine tonsils, whist no longer SRM under NR status, they must continue to be removed as required by food law. Commission Regulation (EC) No 1662/2006 which refers to No 853/2004, Annex III – Section I: Meat of Domestic Ungulates – Chapter IV: Slaughter Hygiene, Point 16(a)

6 NATIONAL BEEF ASSOCIATION

We understand there are a number cattle from the Isle of Man and Guernsey living on English, Welsh and Scottish farms. **These animals and their carcases require a different dressing procedure to NR cattle**

nalbeefassociation.com

The Manx Farmer should reasonably expect a free hand to trade with the UK. However, because the Isle of Man no longer shares the same status as the UK, cattle born in the Isle of Man will now disrupt export-sensitive processing lines in GB. That makes acceptance of Manx cattle a much more commercially complex decision for processors, many of whom are already choosing to avoid the added cost and additional processing required.

This affects cull cattle, but it will have a far greater trade impact on any store or breeding cattle sold in the UK.

For the Isle of Man this has resulted in an immediate trade restriction of considerable financial proportions. Early evidence gathered by the MNFU from both industry in the Isle of Man and the UK indicates that established routes to markets, including the largest of the UK abattoirs, such as ABP, Pickstock, and Dunbia, are refusing IOM cattle, applying additional charges, or additionally requiring separate and restricted slaughter arrangements. This has resulted in immediate restrictions on IOM Producers with significantly reduced cattle values, further imposed strain on cashflow, business planning, feedstock availability and animal welfare. IOM Meats Ltd has already noted over 20% increase on intake on usual time of year expectations (month calculated - February 2026). It is anticipated that this will increase by necessity.

Summary of immediate impacts;

- Marked reduction in access to established market through many abattoirs and auctions leading to cancelled or restricted export sales
- For remaining routes, immediate price reductions or additional cost burdens.
- Greater pressure on farms to retain stock with increased feed, housing and welfare pressures.
- Increasing dependency on Isle of Man Meats Ltd, with associated capacity and financial risks – lead times on cattle already exceeding last four years, leading to farms carrying stock for a longer period of time and further delaying anticipated returns, currently extended to 4 months (Procurement text info lead times on cattle;14 weeks 23rd March 2026).

The Isle of Man had, up until November 2025, well-established UK routes to market. It is a reasonable estimate that there are approximately 4000 cattle in the UK of Manx origin (1). In recent conversation with the DEFA Minister and CO, the UK Under-Secretary of State for DEFRA expressed that they had been surprised at the considerable trade that the Isle of Man does in livestock with the UK (2).

How it has occurred, that the Crown Dependencies (with the exception of Jersey that, along with Northern Ireland, obtained BSE NRS prior to Brexit (b)) were excluded from the application, has been a recent point of contention. However, it is noted that on 9th March 2026, at the Constitutional & Legal Affairs & Justice Committee evidence session with Mr Chris Brannigan, Executive Director of External Relations for IOM Government Cabinet Office (3), that the UK Government 'forgot' about us, and that the IOM Government 'missed' the opportunity to request inclusion in to the application or submit as a separate zone;-

'We do miss things. That's been part of it. So there's been discussion recently over, you know, BSE and blue tongue that had just been missed. When we go back via the Ministry of Justice to talk to DEFRA in the UK, they'll say we just you know, in this sort of post Brexit or reorganisation of UK ministerial departments, they just forgot to tell all the Crown Dependencies. They forgot to tell all of them and failed to pick that through. Those mistakes then become compounded over time. When we do spot that we are able to intervene.'

Both the Islands beef and dairy sectors are exposed to this trade disruption. Beef producers are affected through restricted slaughter and store trade. Dairy producers are affected because calves, heifers and cull stock depend on viable outlets. Most all farms have farm business insurance, however 'business interruption cover' does not extend to this type of disruption to business.

Evidence

Evidence collected by MNFU demonstrates that the immediate and forecast impacts are;-

- Manx cattle values evidenced to have dropped by 28% in comparison to UK live trade price equivalent in November.
- Cull cattle dropped at least 25% per head in value.
- Trade estimated losses of approximately £250-£260 per animal minimum.
- Further disruption as buyers in the UK confirm that they cannot purchase Manx store cattle due to uncertainties in the market.
- Major abattoirs and processors Pickstock, and ABP have confirmed they are not taking Manx Stock
- Dunbia will only process in batch once a month with a deduction of 35pence per kilo approx. (February 2026).

Cont.,

- NFU, Beef Producers Association, and Auctions are advising buyers to 'be aware' when purchasing stock to check its origin, look out for Manx tags, and be sure they have an outlet for the stock before buying.
- Anticipated sales at UK auctions have fallen through, leaving farms carrying stock they do not have resource for. Dairy farms with cattle for UK trade do not have on farm facility to accommodate the retention of stock. There is no ready cash to buy the extra grain needed, or reinvest in the business buying further stock, hitting the supply chain further on.
- Anticipated increased intake at IOM Meats Ltd and capacity risk – Jan increase of 10% intake on cattle, February 20%.
- Knock on impacts on feed and bedding suppliers, as cashflow is further restricted, farms are struggling to pay outstanding feed bills, impacting arable sector.
- Farm Business insurance does not cover losses for this market disruption
- Increasing reputational damage to compound recent issues through meat trade.
- UK Farms with IOM cattle already on farm are reporting a struggle to move this stock on as planned.

It is anticipated that the above will worsen rather than ease, as the situation becomes more established. It is currently uncertain what the impacts of this will be on many long-standing trade relationships (c).

Farm and Trade impact

Farm 1

'We're currently re stocking after changing from continental breeding cattle to a more sustainable breeding cow and will therefore be retaining more heifers and this will in effect produce more cull cows over four years.

Heifers from this herd are genomically tested and achieve a high health status and would be sold through The Stabiliser Cattle Company to other farmers looking to source in-calf heifers. These heifers have a higher breeding cost due to Ai bulls used and time spent on management.

Bulls bred are offered for sale and any not sold would be sent to the Isle of Man Meat Plant at a 20p per kg reduction on clean cattle price and are subject to a weight restriction, whereby any kilos above 360kg are not paid for. The UK has no weight restriction or price reduction.

All cows over 3yr old priced as not in-calf - 65 cows @ £1900 = £119,700
Meat Plant price based on Av live weight 685kilo and killing out at 48% =328Kilo x£2.00 per kilo meat plant average price =£656
£656 minus the large killing charge av£118 per head = £538 per head
£538 x 65cows = £34,970 meat plant price (loss of £84,730)

The reality is cows would only be sold at the top price if we were to have a dispersal sale the price we get on average for any cull cows exported usually net £1200 therefor the total price reduction due to not being able to export is £43,000

Heifers from the herd are priced on sliding scale as to their estimated breeding valve in-calf at 20 to 24 months of age, prices range from £2200 to £2400. These have no value as I've been told by the Stabiliser Cattle Company, they're not wanted due to having Manx Passports so no buyers can be found. '

Farm 2
'Cull cows with a combined weight of 734kg at £2.00 per kilo, which after deductions resulted in a payment of £1,294 to the producer.

On previous occasions when sending cows for export and assuming the same grades and weights, they would have achieved £3.55 per kilo, which after deductions would have resulted in the producer being £786 better off.

A further example being pre-BSE restrictions when exports to the UK attracted a price of £4.80 per kilo, which after deductions would have resulted in an additional £917.50. So, if we look at the payment advice the producer has incurred a net loss of £1706.31.'

Monthly export figures comparison;

	November	**December**	**January**	**February**	**Total annual export for the year**
2021	646	214	280	127	4564
2022	398	186	117	187	4074
2023	416	343	127	467	4031
2024	125	167	157	431	3601
2025	330	142	194	134	2309
2026	NA	NA	121	42	NA

Cattle Export Totals for periods November to February from 2020 – 2026;

2020 - 2021	1160
2021 - 2022	1164
2022 - 2023	1178
2023 - 2024	1347
2024 - 2025	620
2025 - 2026	635

Data sourced from Cattle Export Statistics IOM Government (4)

Livestock exports are subject to changes in trade and global factors along with domestic policy and access to markets. Notable fluctuations in numbers can be attributed to 2020 lockdown, trade pressures, the 2023 spike in input costs which in turn caused contraction in production, and the upward price pressure on beef 2024-25 which impacted export figures. It is notable that export peaked in November 2025 as awareness of the restrictions on IOM Stock in the UK marketplace began to surface. January saw just over 30% drop in trade on the previous 5-year average. There is subsequently a marked drop in the normal export figures for February. This represents an 84% drop in trade from the previous five-year average for February exports. This is directly attributed to the restrictions in access to market for Manx Producers and aligns with the increase in intake pressure on Isle of Man Meats Ltd.

It must be remembered that this is a status recognition problem**,** not a disease problem (evidenced with IOM's disease history Table 1). However, until formal negligible-risk recognition is achieved, Manx cattle will inevitably remain commercially disadvantaged in the GB supply chains. It is conservatively estimated that for Isle of Man to gain equal status as the UK, it will take around 24 months. WOAH application processes mean any application would not be reviewed until May 2027, with EU recognition likely taking at least a further six months.

Summary

Protocol 3 to the UK's Act of Accession

Article 1

1. The Community rules on customs matters and quantitative restrictions, in particular those of the Act of Accession, shall apply to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man under the same conditions as they apply to the United Kingdom. In particular, customs duties and charges having equivalent effect between those territories and the Community, as originally constituted and between those territories and the new Member States, shall be progressively reduced in accordance with the timetable laid down in Articles 32 and 36 of the Act of Accession. The Common Customs Tariff and the ECSC unified tariff shall be progressively applied in accordance with the timetable laid down in Articles 39 and 59 of the Act of Accession, and account being taken of Articles 109, 110 and 119 of that Act.
2. In respect of agricultural products and products processed therefrom which are the subject of a special trade regime, the levies and other import measures laid down in Community rules and applicable by the United Kingdom shall be applied to third countries.

Such provisions of Community rules, in particular those of the Act of Accession, as are necessary to allow free movement and observance of normal conditions of competition in trade in these products shall also be applicable.

The Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall determine the conditions under which the provisions referred to in the preceding sub-paragraphs shall be applicable to these territories.

Extract from Isle of Man Government website (5)

Following Brexit, the Isle of Man agricultural trade with EU and UK can no longer be assumed under Protocol 3 and instead IOM holds third country status for many trade purposes. It was declared as a political priority for IOM Government to protect its trade status for all sectors in a post-Brexit trade landscape. However, the UK's move to negligible BSE risk status for ongoing trade purposes, excluding the Isle of Man has presented an immediate and significant market access problem and considerable financial exposure.

The main consequences that will be carried by the Isle of Man agricultural industry are severely reduced market and processing access, markedly lower cattle values, additional administrative and handling costs, and increased pressure on local capacity, including on farm retention of stock and strain on inputs.

Conclusion

The IOM Government response should focus on two priorities:- **provision of financial package to compensate the industry for losses incurred as a direct result of the omission, support trade and producer viability more fully for ongoing damage limitation**, and **secure formal (WOAH & EU) BSE negligible-risk recognition in the medium term. Responses from IOM Government must run concomitantly**.

Required actions already underway (confirmed by IOM Government CVO);

1. Compilation of surveillance, traceability and legal evidence needed to support WOAH/EU application for BSE NR Status to enable normal trade to resume *(Preparation and submission of a WOAH application for BSE negligible-risk recognition currently with UK Govt for review).*
2. Review of legislation and guidance to ensure alignment with revised BSE status and certification requirements.
3. Improvements to formal communication channels with UK Government, particularly with DEFRA and UK CVO.

Interventions required to mitigate against further damage;

1. Urgently secure an interim agreement with GB abattoirs and regulators on segregation, slaughter arrangements and assess cost recovery and design methods for delivery of compensation to the industry. For clarity IOM Government should not consider modulating funds out of any existing agricultural budget, as this would inevitably cause further detriment to the industry rather than remediate the situation.
2. Isle of Man Meats and DEFA to implement a rapid response strategy to manage any increase in local throughput without increasing lead times or damaging producer returns.
3. Considerations on the current cost of shipping as an avenue for intervention.
4. Assess and provide support and assistance where necessary for any urgent farm welfare and feed-pressure risks from stock retention.
5. Provide Isle of Man producers with up-to-date information, assurance, and support.

Sources;

1. Estimation of Livestock Auctioneers Association, DEFA export statistics.

2. Notes from MNFU/DEFA Joint Liaison Bi-monthly forum

3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MOOYodXCek

4. Cattle Export Statistics IOM Government - https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/agriculture/cattle/cattle-export-statistics/

5. Extract from Isle of Man Government website information- https://www.gov.im/media/624101/protocol3relationshipwiththeeu.pdf

Explanatory notes;

(a). Specified Risk Material (SRM) **refers to** parts of cattle (and some other ruminants) that are most likely to carry the infectious agent that causes **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy.** These tissues must be removed during slaughter and permanently excluded from the human and animal food chains**.** Brain and spinal cord**,** eyes**,** tonsils, parts of the intestine, plus skull and vertebral column for OTM. **Ref. Food Standards Agency UK Rules**

(b) Northern Ireland was awarded BSE negligible risk status in 2017. Jersey, through a UK delegate, sought BSE negligible risk status in 2019 and this was approved in 2021 (WOAH).

(c). Report content will be updated on receipt of any further information from IOM Meats Ltd, IOM/UK producer/processor trade data, and UK/IOM Government.