MAD COW DISEASE!

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Possibly, you have heard a lot about Mad Cow Disease on the news in the last few months. It is also known as BSE, bovine spongiform encephalopathy. It is a progressive, lethal central nervous system disease of cattle. It is characterized by the appearance in neurons in the brain of affected cattle of vacuole (clear holes) that give the brain the appearance of a sponge – this is where the term spongiform comes from.

This is an Internet homework assignment. Only use web sites from medical sites, universities or government agencies. Record the web sites you used on the back of this paper.

1. If it is not caused by a bacteria or virus – what is it caused by?

2. How does one get this disease if the cause is a particle?

3. What does this particle do to its victim?

4. There were many cases in England and Europe this year. Could we get it here?

5. How would it get here?

6. Since the disease seems to come from eating cattle, is there also a danger that we could get it from cosmetics like lipstick, Jell-O or from bone meal we might put on our plants in the garden.

7. How could prions get into lipstick?

8. How could prions get into Jell-O?

9. Two similar diseases CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease) and Kuru (headhunter's disease) have been seen in Papua New Guinea. How are these diseases transmitted?

10. How are the two diseases in #9 related to BSE?

11. How is BSE cured?