



The dissection of bulls' eyes and BSE

The current level of understanding about Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) suggests that the dissection of bull's eyes should present no risk of the transfer of infection provided normal hygiene practices are followed. These are the sort outlined in Topics in Safety, chapter 4, although no specific mention is made of BSE.

The practices include washing hands after handling the bull's eyes, and avoiding all hand-to-mouth operations during the practical session. Cuts and scratches should be covered with a waterproof dressing before commencing work. All surfaces which may become contaminated should be washed thoroughly at the end of the work, warm soapy water ought to be sufficient but there may be a case for using diluted bleach (in which case protective gloves will be necessary) or a surfactant sterilising solution.

Safe disposal of all material after dissection is required, by incineration if possible, although it is permissible to dispose of fresh material through the same system as kitchen waste. We would recommend incineration if at all possible since this will eliminate all risks, however slight, completely.

Advice on this disease is not always consistent. There may be local rules which override those given above and teachers should always follow such local rules.

References

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- 3. Interim Report of the Consultative Committee on Research into Spongiform Encephalopathies (The Tyrrell Report); June 1989; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Department of Health.
- 4. Editorial, Lancet 1990; 336: 21-22.
- 5. "Prion dementia without characteristics pathology", J Collinge et al; Lancet 1990; 336: 7-9.