

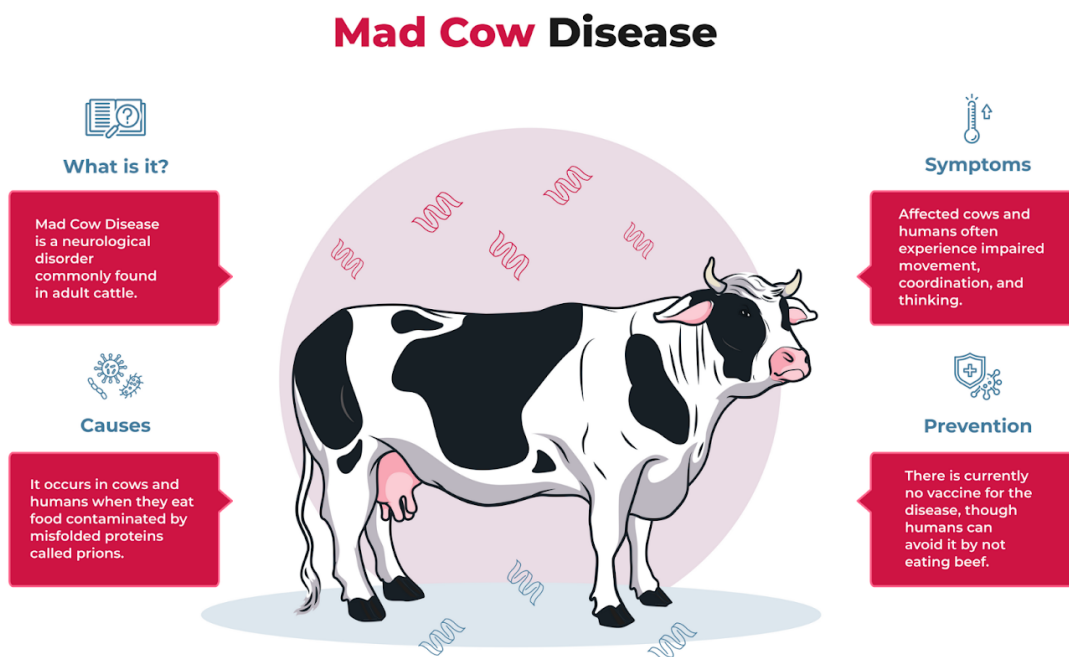


Mad Cow Disease

Why in News?

Recently, Brazil has halted its beef exports to China after a case of Mad Cow Disease was confirmed in the northern state of Para.

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What is Mad Cow Disease?

- **About:**
 - Also known as **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)** is degenerative, transmissible, **slowly progressive, and a fatal infection that affects the central nervous system** of adult cattle.
- **Causes:**
 - BSE is caused by a **protein called a prion** normally found on cell surfaces, the normal prion protein changes into an abnormal prion protein that is harmful.
 - After getting altered, these proteins destroy the nervous system tissue- the brain and spinal cord.
 - The body of a sick cow **does not even know the abnormal prion** is there. Without knowing it is there, the **cow's body cannot fight off the disease.**
- **Transmission:**
 - A cow gets BSE by eating feed contaminated **with parts that came from another cow that was sick with BSE.**
- **Symptoms:**
 - A common sign of BSE in cows is incoordination. A sick cow has **trouble walking and**

getting up and may also act very nervous or violent.

- It usually takes **four to six years from the time a cow** is infected with the abnormal prion to when it first shows symptoms of BSE. This is called the **incubation period**. During the incubation period, there is no way to tell that a cow has BSE by looking at it.
- Once a cow starts to show symptoms, it gets sicker and sicker until it dies, usually within two weeks to six months.

▪ **Treatment:**

- There is **no treatment for BSE and no vaccine** to prevent it.

[Source: HT](#)

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