

RESTRICTED



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

9/1

From the Private Secretary

30 June 1994

Mr. P. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

John John,

... minute ...

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER  
30 JUNE: BSE

The Prime Minister said that Germany's handling of the beef question was causing problems here. Kinkel acknowledged this. The German people were very sensitive about beef. The German approach would be to avoid British beef until there was scientific evidence to prove conclusively that it was not dangerous. He knew that legal problems would arise if Germany had to follow a unilateral approach. However, the elections gave this a big political dimension. "One case would be curtains for us".

The Prime Minister said that we were very sensitive to the public health aspects. But we had been given clear scientific advice. Indeed, we were taking further measures today. There was no danger in the consumption of beef. Unilateral restrictions would be damaging for British beef not only in Germany but more widely, because of the example which the German action would set for others. He was aware of the politics of this inside Germany. However, if the Bundesrat imposed a ban, Germany would be in breach of community rules and the Commission would take action. He hoped it would not come to that.

The Prime Minister said that we were checking the health aspects in no less than 50 different research projects. The advice we had received was that humans were not at risk and we had now announced new measures. He hoped that a solution could be found.

Kinkel said that he was not happy to have to deal with this problem in our bilateral relations. He explained that there would be a six month delay after approval of the proposed restrictions by the Bundesrat. Germany would appeal

49

94/06.30/17.1

CVO BSE 2 118 2517

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 2 -

to the Commission to make further efforts to find a satisfactory solution on a European level before unilateral restrictions came into effect.

The Prime Minister noted that there had been a 30 per cent drop in meat consumption in Germany as a result of public fears about BSE. He warned that the European beef market could be severely damaged if the scare spread beyond Germany. Fears about eggs a few years ago had wiped out much of the British egg industry, and had cost the Government a fortune in compensation.

Christopher Meyer briefed the lobby on agreed lines after the meeting.

I am sending copies of this letter to Jill Wordley (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and Geoffrey Fitchew and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office), and by fax to Sir Nigel Broomfield (Bonn).

*yours ever,*

*Roderic*

RODERIC LYNE

R J Sawers Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

50

CI

94/06.30/17.2

RESTRICTED