

Mad Cows and Market Forces¹

Dannis Bartels

KEYWORDS BSE. Madcow Disease. Ethnocentrism. Metanarrative. Ideology

ABSTRACT It is argued that ideological predispositions underlay response to the public controversy surrounding bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease) that emerged in Britain during the late 1980s. The unconscious, often contradictory, interplay of scientific, precautionary, anti-capitalist, pro-capitalist, and ethnocentric/nationalist narrative led people to accept or reject government claims that British beef products were safe to consume.