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## Netherlands reports third human death from mad cow disease 02/02/2009

The third person in the Netherlands died of the human variant of mad cow disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob, in the beginning of January.

THE HAGUE—A third person in four years has died from the human form of mad cow disease in the Netherlands, the national health research agency RIVM said Monday.

"The patient died at the beginning of January," it announced in a press statement. "An investigation has confirmed that the patient died of the variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease."

The incurable disease is contracted from eating beef infected with BSE, also known as mad cow disease—caused by a rogue protein that proliferates in the brain and turns it spongy.

The RIVM did not say how, when or where the patient contracted the disease, but pointed out that the incubation period, from infection to the display of symptoms, could last decades.

Investigations were ongoing into the "very rare chance" that the patient may have infected other people.

The statement stressed that Dutch beef was safe, explaining that all slaughtered cows are since 2001 tested for BSE.

The RIVM said two other people have died of the disease in the Netherlands, one diagnosed in 2005 and the other in 2006.

"About 200 people have died of the disease in the world, 167 of them in Britain," said the statement.

AFP/Expatica