
1. Mad Cow Disease

Why in News?

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

Highlights

- 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.
- It is 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
- 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