

# Mass-Observation Summer Directive 1996

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## Part One

### BEEF: B.S.E. and the whole “Mad Cow” debate

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*You have probably been expecting this to turn up in the directive eventually - it seems an important issue for Mass-Observation to cover, so even if you are growing tired of the subject, I hope you will spare us a few of your thoughts. Please remember to include on the top right hand of your reply your usual mini-biography (M-O number, age, sex, occupation, town etc).*

Please write about this from what ever angle you feel suits you. I shall list below some guidelines which you should use if they seem helpful but I don't want to dictate the way you answer this directive because I think different people will want to offer different kinds of answers, and I want to encourage you to write most about what interests and concerns you.

First of all, could you please describe your own reactions to news about BSE? If you are directly involved in farming or the food production or retail business, please state early on in your reply and describe any policy decisions you have had to make and how they have worked out for you.

On the domestic front: has the news influenced your eating habits? If you have changed in your habits, can you say when you first thought about changing and describe what you feel the risks are as you see them?

If you can, please describe how your eating habits compare with those around you (in relation to beef, but also perhaps in relation to other meats if it seems relevant). For example, has your immediate family/household changed? What about your friends and acquaintances? Your colleagues at work? How do you think people decide what is safe and what is not safe?

Comments and observations on the policy of your local shops and restaurants? If you have any stories to tell (including jokes and stories which may or may not be true!), please tell us.

Have you followed the statements made by scientists and other experts? What is your feeling generally about the scientific opinion? Have you followed some of the medical news about the forms of BSE which affects human beings? Any thoughts on this, and on the way such news is handled by the newspapers, television and radio?

What is your opinion of the government handling of the BSE issue? How does this relate, in your opinion, to Britain's role in the European Community? Any comments to make on the problem for farmers? Any comments on whole area of meat production and the farming business, including the types of feed used for cattle?

**PTO**

Finally (and if you haven't fully covered these already) have you any general comments about how the whole issue has influenced your views in relation to:

Eating meat at all  
The present government  
Scientific experts

Farmers  
British membership of the EC  
The Media

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## Part Two

# The Supernatural: what do you believe?

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*Please remember to start a new sheet of paper and include your mini-biography. Thanks.*

We have called this section the "supernatural" but it's quite hard finding a word that is broad enough to cover everything that everyone might think of as supernatural, and their beliefs in it. Do you believe in supernatural occurrences?

The first task, then, is to ask you to list everything you can think of that might come under this heading, and the next task is to comment on your own experiences and views.

For each item on your list, could you please provide the following information:

(1) Give your definitions of what it is. So if "ghosts" is the first thing on your list, for example, you should explain what you think a ghost is (or what you think other people believe in if you personally don't believe in ghosts).

(2) If this is something you believe in yourself, please describe when you first heard about it. Was it through stories from your parents or other family members? Through books or films? through some kind of special experience? Can you recall? Details please.

Do you enjoy reading about the supernatural? Please describe books, magazines etc which you read. Can you explain why you like them?

Do you watch films, videos or television programmes with a supernatural theme? Please describe? Can you explain why you like them?

Finally, if you do believe in the supernatural, or some elements of the supernatural, can you describe how this is important to your outlook on life? How does it affect your behaviour? How does it relate to your other beliefs, especially any religious beliefs that you may hold? Do you feel they have a special meaning to you because of some experience in your life? Please take this opportunity to write as fully as you can on the question. There is no need to apologise for rambling as we want to hear from you in as much detail and depth as you have time for.

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