Major banned the use of cattle feed containing animal protein & introduced new regulations in abattoirs. However, the government failed to ensure that the new regs were rigorously enforced & (trying not to antagonise farmers) it failed to make sure that farmers slaughtered their animals early enough.

As a result, there were further outbreaks of BSE.

By 1996 there was worldwide concern about British beef & the EU banned further imports - as a result the government was forced to introduce a large-scale slaughtering policy.

This whole episode was a tragedy for farmers - by the May 1997 general election, the ban on British beef exports still hadn’t been lifted.

The election of 1st May 1997:

- As the election drew near, Britain began to move out of recession. Unemployment was falling & inflation was low & well under control. The National Lottery was set up & raised lots of money for charity, sports, the arts & the national heritage.
- Opinion polls predicted a Labour victory of 40-50 seats.
- Labour won the election with a majority of 179.
- Labour had 418 seats, their highest total since 1945, beating even the 393 seats of 1945.
- The Tories won 165 seats, their lowest total since 1906, when they had 157.
- The Lib Dems won 46 seats.
- More women were elected than ever before: the number just about doubled to 119, of whom 109 were Labour.
- The Lib Dems doubled their number of seats although their share of the vote fell by 1%.
- The Tories won more votes than the Lib Dems in Scotland but they won no seats!
- The Tories won twice as many votes as Plaid Cymru - but Plaid Cymru won 4 seats whereas the Tories won nothing!
- In the past, the system had always helped the Tories but this time it counted against them!

Why did the Tories lose so heavily?

- Some historians believe that the Tories never recovered from 'Black Wednesday', when the pound was forced out of the ERM. Previous financial crises - 1931, 1949, 1967 & 1976 - had all