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Sommario/riassunto	The BSE(bovine spongiform encephalopathy) saga has made painfully evident the limitations of risk communication as a one way avenue where information to the public about the risks they face come after critical policy decisions have already been made. In fact communication has even been identified as one of the key elements of what went wrong and generated the loss of trust in government discourse and in beef in Europe. Clearly there was a need to learn from that experience and share those lessons. This challenge was taken up by the WHO and a group of European scholars, with the support of DG Research. This book takes the debate about risk communication a step further, dealing with it as an evolving and interactive process between decision makers and their publics. The book underlies the critical importance of creating mechanisms for interaction between policy-makers and stakeholders early on, and at all stages of policy-making, in order for risk communication to be effective. The book sets the stage for the development of practical recommendations that health information actors may adopt in order to engage with the public over perceptions of health risks and hazards. The analyses presented in this book, will

come to food and public health audiences as a welcome surprise. The book reports on research into the strategies used by different actors to communicate about BSE and CJD (Creutzfeldt Jakob disease) in four European countries between 1985 and 2000. These actors include the mass media, health information systems, and political actors. The research also assessed the way people construct their perceptions about risk, who they listen to and how they make decisions on risk avoidance. A range of qualitative and quantitative methods were used and are reported in this book which also includes a detailed analysis of the mass media reporting of the issue over the period that is quite unique.
