

7 June 2010

To: *Dr. Toshiro Kawashima, CVO*
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CC: *Dr. Bernard Vallat, OIE*
John Dalli, EU Commissioner Health and Consumer Policy
Members of European Parliament

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Japan 2010

The European Livestock Association (ELA) is aiming towards enduring systems of animal husbandry. It has some well-known scientists specialised in Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) among their members.

In relation to the FMD measures taken in Japan, the ELA members feel the urgency to state the following:

- The statement of the Japanese Authorities that FMD cannot be eradicated by vaccination is incorrect.
- It would be most unfortunate if Japan repeated the mistakes made in the management of control of FMD in the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands in 2001 and if Japan would suffer similar economic and social consequences for the livestock industry and the wider rural community.

The main objective of the Japanese authorities is to stop the spread of disease, bring the epidemic under control and return to an FMD-free status as quickly as possible.

ELA strongly advises to give careful consideration to the following questions and answers:

Can the above objective be achieved?

Answer: By stamping out/vaccinate-to-kill. Yes, however - like in the UK - that becomes only successful when hosts to be infected are (almost) no more available.

The disadvantages of this policy include:

- the considerable numbers of animals slaughtered in order to 'kill' the virus and stop its spread;
- the socio-economic and practical implications;
- the welfare problems in humans and animals caused by widespread slaughter;
- the impossibility of ensuring accurate diagnosis when the emphasis is on slaughter;
- the impossibility of maintaining bio-security (shortage of veterinary surgeons, slaughter teams - and occasional non-co-operative/rogue livestock owners and dealers);
- the loss of valuable genetic lines etc.;
- the ethical problem to accept the destruction of livestock that are perfectly safe to eat.

Are there more effective alternatives?

Yes. Vaccination to live should replace stamping out/vaccination to slaughter, in combination with:

- tracing the disease as fast as possible by using newer diagnostic tests with which one can quickly confirm infection, even in the prodromal/preclinical phase, giving almost immediate assurance;
- immediate slaughter of animals on infected premises;
- utilising ring vaccination (from uninfected areas towards the areas where there is the confirmed infection);
- even if animals incubating FMDV or animals with FMD are inadvertently vaccinated, they will subsequently shed less virus; an obvious advantage of vaccination.
- maintaining bio-security on farms and a ban on animal transports;

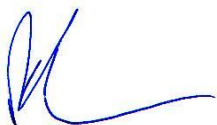
In consideration of the above we would like to advise the following:

- the size of the vaccination zones should not be based on a generic contingency plan, but must be estimated according to the type of outbreak: e.g. a multiple loci situation because FMD was initially unrecognised, (like the UK FMD epidemic of 2001), versus a single FMD locus that was quickly identified, (like the UK FMD outbreak of 2007). In the first case the zones must be large, in the last case the zones can be kept relatively small;
- to apply modern purified high potency emergency vaccines that are very effective and provide protective immunity in a matter of days;
- after vaccination, to differentiate infected animals from vaccinated animals (DIVA strategy), by serological screening of vaccinated farms using the appropriate tests;

We hope to contribute to a better way of animal health control, appropriate to the scientifically advanced tools of the 21st Century, both for the well-being of the rural societies and their livestock that serve humanity so well.

We wish you every success in bringing the outbreaks rapidly under control.

With kind regards,



Peter King, Chair

and the ELA scientists and FMD experts

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