

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Report on Activities since the Second Session

The Executive Committee reported as follows:

Since the Second Session of the Commission in March 1955, the Executive Committee had met on three occasions: 29 June 1955, in London, 11 November 1955, in Rome; and 20 March 1956, in Rome. At these meetings the Secretariat of the Commission had made reports on the work carried out during the preceding period and decisions had been taken on further activities to be undertaken.

Since the Second Session of the Commission, five countries had deposited the necessary instruments of acceptance of the Constitution and were now Members of the Commission, viz. Austria, Iceland, Italy, Portugal and Turkey. The total membership was thus eleven, viz. Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

Meetings between the Secretariat of the Commission and the Director of the International Office of Epizootics had resulted in an Agreement on the reporting of outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and speedy dissemination of information. [A copy of the Agreement is attached (Appendix I).] Copies of the Agreement, which had come into operation on 1 January, had been sent to the Governments of all European countries. The working of the Agreement had been discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on 20 March 1956, and it had been decided that details of the operation of the reporting system be further discussed with OIE and that, if necessary, the Agreement be amended to clarify the position.

Members of the Secretariat of the Commission had visited the following countries and had had discussions on the control of foot-and-mouth disease with the respective veterinary authorities:- Italy, Austria, Western Germany, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Turkey and Greece. The discussions had included the measures adopted for the control of foot-and-mouth disease within the country, vaccines and vaccination, arrangements for typing the viruses of foot-and-mouth disease, and the reporting of outbreaks.

These visits had been valuable in that they had enabled the Secretariat to gain information on national plans for the control of the disease; knowledge of such plans was important in drawing up over-all schemes for the control of foot-and-mouth disease throughout Europe.

It was to be noted that visits had been made to some countries which were not Members of the Commission. The veterinary authorities of these countries had freely provided the desired information and had expressed the desire to assist the Commission in its activities.

Generally speaking, the foot-and-mouth disease position in Europe had not greatly changed during the past year. However, there were still a number of centres of infection (in France, Italy and Turkey) from which the disease could spread at any time.

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Discussions had been held on several occasions with the veterinary authorities of Italy. The position of foot-and-mouth disease control had been reviewed and a visit to the Po Valley, where the situation was rendered particularly difficult by the heavy concentration of livestock, had been made by a member of the Secretariat. The Secretariat and the Italian veterinary authorities were jointly discussing control measures which might be considered with a view to preventing spread of the infection within the country; Italy was not an exporter of livestock. The risk of the introduction of the disease to Italy from other countries was particularly great because of Italy's substantial imports of livestock, and advice had also been sought on this aspect of the problem.

A serious problem existed in Turkey, where the disease was endemic, and it was difficult for many reasons to devise and apply effective control measures. However, the Secretariat had certain proposals under consideration which it was proposed to discuss with the Turkish authorities.

Further discussions on research projects had taken place between the Secretariat and OEEC. In collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands, OEEC, on behalf of the Commission, had convened a Seminar in Amsterdam on the identification of types of the viruses of foot-and-mouth disease and on the cultivation of the viruses. Members of the Secretariat of the Commission had attended the Seminar and had taken an active part in the work. Participants attended from 11 countries and two international organizations. The proceedings had consisted of lectures, discussions and laboratory demonstrations. This was the first occasion on which laboratory workers on foot-and-mouth disease had been able to meet as a group to discuss and demonstrate methods of typing foot-and-mouth disease viruses. Undoubtedly, the Seminar could be considered to have been highly successful and the Commission was indebted to OEEC for the part it had played in making it possible.

In accordance with the instructions of the Commission at its Second Session, OEEC had also been approached on the carrying out of a project to ascertain the duration of immunity induced by foot-and-mouth disease vaccines. (The carrying out of this project had been recommended by the Joint Advisory Committee of OIE, OEEC and the Commission.) An outline of the experiment had been drawn up and an estimate of costs had been prepared. Up to the present time, it had not been possible to implement this project.

On instructions from the Executive Committee, the Secretariat had made an examination of the available evidence of the spread of foot-and-mouth disease from the method of disposal of carcasses of infected and in-contact cattle, slaughtered as part of a slaughter policy and of cattle used in the production of virus for vaccine preparation. This matter had also been discussed at the FAO Meeting held in Paris in February 1956 on the Appraisal of Quarantine Regulations for the Importation and Exportation of Livestock, at which the Commission had been represented. The conclusion reached was that, with regard to muscle tissue, provided carcasses had been allowed to hang for an adequate period, at a suitable temperature, prior to refrigeration, the virus would not persist: but, in the case of bones, offal, lymph nodes and residual blood, the virus might survive for long periods and constituted serious danger if brought into contact with susceptible stock.

The Commission endorsed this report.
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