



# Stories from the field



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## DPR Korea halts foot and mouth disease with help from FAO

DPR Korea

Outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2011 were quickly brought under control by the prompt response of the Animal Health unit of FAO's Crisis Management Centre.\* At the DPRK's request, the Centre dispatched a Rapid Response Team to the country between 28 February and 8 March 2011 to assess the scope of the FMD outbreaks and to advise authorities on how to contain and control the outbreaks.

The team launched a two-phase emergency project that increased the DPRK's epidemiological capacities by training health authorities and implementing biosecurity measures that would halt the further spread of the disease. FAO also reinforced an existing project, building up laboratory capacities and providing critical inputs that ensured the continuity of laboratory activities for more effective surveillance of disease outbreaks. The existing project aimed at

timely detection and diagnosis of diseases and efficient and effective preparations for large-scale vaccination campaigns.

**Better biosecurity measures and upgraded provincial laboratories led to the successful control of FMD.** FAO provided a skilled veterinarian and trainer who facilitated workshops in Pyongyang for 200 DPRK county vets to increase epidemiological capacity at the field level. Technical materials designed for local training were published and made available to the 200 county vets to distribute to other health officials in the field. After the workshop, provincial laboratories were upgraded with the tools and equipment needed to accurately diagnose FMD.

**The World Reference Laboratory identified the FMD strain and FAO procured vaccine for the DPRK.** Through FAO, DPRK health officials sent 30 serum samples and a sample of

tongue epithelium to Pirbright Laboratory on 30 May 2011. On 7 June 2011 the laboratory informed DPRK health authorities that the FMD virus was identified as type O and a matching serum was identified.

A million doses of FMD vaccine poured into the DPRK on 16 November 2011 for the first round of inoculations. This reached 577 000 cattle as well as pigs, goats and sheep on collective state farms, including stockbreeding farms. Another 900 000 doses of FMD vaccines were supplied to eight provinces where outbreaks had occurred. These were used to vaccinate goats and pigs bred in individual homes near state farms where FMD outbreaks occurred. The remaining 2 000 bottles of vaccine, and another 21 600 bottles of vaccine received later, were held in cold storage in Jongju and were used in the next round of vaccinations in 2012.

**Preventing a recurrence of FMD:** DPRK officials carried out FMD surveillance across the country, mobilizing veterinary authorities, animal farms and cooperative farms. There was no recurrence of FMD outbreaks since the end of March 2011. In the future, technical and training assistance will continue in light of the effective eradication campaign.

**\*Project:** Emergency assistance for early detection, response and control of FMD outbreaks (TCP/DRK/3305, Phase II of TCP/DRK/3104); (OSRO/DRK/103/CHA)

**Donor and budget:** FAO, US\$1 089 735

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