



EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEER E P O R T

of the Meeting held in Rome on 13 March 1967

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Rome on 13 March 1967. The following members were present: Dr. R. Gaier (Chairman), Dr. A. Ademollo (Vice-Chairman), Mr. J. Reid (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Chr. Werdelin, Dr. J.M. van den Born, Dr. S. Mihajlović and Dr. A. Sedej. Dr. E.A. Eichhorn, Chief Animal Health Branch, FAO, Dr. G.M. Boldrini (Secretary), Sir Thomas Dalling and Miss D. Guarino were also present.

1. The following Agenda was approved:-

- a) Adoption of Agenda
- b) Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held at Dubrovnik
- c) Approval of Working Papers
- d) Suggestions for nominations of officers
- e) Any other business.

2. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee held at Dubrovnik on 12-14 October 1966 which had been circulated were considered. Dr. Werdelin pointed out that in connection with the statement in the Minutes under "Any other business" concerning the possibility of vaccine being made available by the Danish Government, the results of the potency tests which were necessary are not yet available and, therefore, the Government has not yet been consulted.

3. Working papers for the 14th Session

The Secretary explained that Paper No. 2 (Serological Variation of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus in Iran (1963-66)) was the summary of an article prepared by Dr. Traub and his co-workers in Iran, which is to be published soon in a scientific journal.

Paper No. 4 (FAO Campaigns against Foot-and-Mouth Disease in South Eastern Europe and Anatolia) contains a review of the activities and the situation as at December 1966. There was some discussion on the subject of creating a new buffer zone or zones along the south-eastern borders of Anatolia. The general feeling of the meeting was that such an enterprise would be full of technical difficulties, as well as considerable costs of providing the required vaccine and particularly its transportation which would much exceed the actual price of the vaccine. The Secretary stated that the new Turkish Foot-and-Mouth Disease Institute would probably be operating by the end of this year, but that at least two years would then be required before large amounts of vaccine were being produced. There

would seem to be a need for further assistance to be given for the vaccination campaign in western Turkey, for even although some action was taken regarding buffer zones in the eastern part of Turkey, such a zone or zones would not replace the present buffer zones which have proved so successful.

The Secretary dealt with Paper No. 5 (Report of the Executive Committee), explaining the various sections. Some reservations were still expressed on the risks of introducing foot-and-mouth disease virus in frozen meat brought to Bulgaria from Ethiopia. The Committee would be very satisfied if frozen meat could be replaced by canned meat, a possibility now understood to be under consideration.

Much interest was expressed in the report of the meeting of the Research Group of the Commission's Standing Technical Committee at Pirbright. It was explained that a full report of the meeting, including copies of all the papers presented, will be available at the Session later this week. An important feature of the meeting is that, following reports and discussions at the meetings in Amsterdam (1964), Lyons (1965) and Pirbright (1966), attended also by laboratory specialists from non-member countries, replies to some problems referred to the Group by the Commission, are now available.

Reference was made to the meeting of the Research Group in 1967 which will take place at Plum Island, U.S.A., in September. On this occasion, there will be a general exchange of views on research in progress and in the future as well as consideration of other aspects of the control of foot-and-mouth disease.

Paper No. 6 (Budgets for 1967 and 1968) and Paper No. 7 (Accounts) were briefly considered.

Paper No. 8 (Increase in Contributions) was discussed. It was generally felt that an increase of 20 percent of the present contributions would be a satisfactory amount to request.

Under "Any other business", the subject of typing strains of the virus causing outbreaks and the distribution of information on such typing results was raised. In some countries, reports on the virus concern only types, e.g. O, A, etc., without any information being provided on possible sub-types within the types. It was strongly felt that there should be some means of obtaining such important information as speedily as possible, in order that, if vaccination is to be carried out in neighbouring or other countries for protection against the introduction of such viruses, the appropriate vaccine will be used.

The Chairman drew the attention of the Committee to the retirement of Dr. Ademollo from his official post in Italy and therefore also from membership of the Commission. He expressed the thanks of the Committee for the fine cooperative work done by Dr. Ademollo during the whole period of his association with the Commission.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
13 March 1967, Rome, Italy

R E P O R T

of Meeting held in Dubrovnik on 12-14 October 1966

A Meeting of the Executive Committee of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease was held in Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia) on 12-14 October 1966.

There were present Dr. R.P. Gaier - Austria (Chairman), Prof. A. Ademollo - Italy (Vice-Chairman), together with Dr. Scherli, Mr. J. Reid - United Kingdom (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Chr. Werdelin - Denmark, Dr. J.M. van den Born - Netherlands and Dr. S. Mihajlović - Yugoslavia, Dr. E.A. Eichhorn, Chief, Animal Health Branch, FAO and Dr. G.M. Boldrini and Miss D. Guarino of the Secretariat.

The following officials of the Yugoslav Ministry of Agriculture were also present: Prof. Dr. Drago Ercegovac, Veterinary Faculty, Belgrade; Prof. Dr. Rade Turubatović, Veterinary Faculty, Belgrade; Dr. Momir Borojević, Deputy Director, Veterinary Research Institute, Zemun, Belgrade; Dr. Marko Zeljiko, Chief of Research Department of Veterinary Research Institute, Zagreb; and Dr. Albin Sedej, Chief, Federal Veterinary Services of Slovenia, Ljubljana.

The Meeting was opened by Dr. Mihajlović who welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and the Chief of the Animal Health Branch, FAO, to Yugoslavia in the name of his Government.

The following agenda, which had been circulated was adopted:-

1. Adoption of agenda
 2. Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee held in Milan on 1 February 1966
 3. The foot-and-mouth disease situation in Europe
 4. The foot-and-mouth disease situation in South-Eastern Europe and the Near East
 5. Surveys carried out by the Secretariat and future activities of the Commission
 6. Administrative matters - Revision of the scale of contributions
 7. Any other business
1. The present position of foot-and-mouth disease (October 1966) in Europe Yugoslavia

During the first six months of 1966, foot-and-mouth disease occurred in cattle and pigs on 12 farms in Yugoslavia. Virus type O was the causal virus of all these outbreaks. Strict sanitary measures and stamping-out were applied to eradicate the disease. The last outbreak occurred on 1 June 1966 and since then, Yugoslavia has been free of the disease.

Italy

The incidence of foot-and-mouth disease in Italy is in steady regression. The number of outbreaks during the first 9 months of 1966 amounted to 1447 which was less than half of the outbreaks of the year before. Typing was carried out on specimens from 206 outbreaks during the first 7 months of 1966 and virus A was found in 32 (15.53 percent), virus O in 151 (73.30 percent), and virus C in 23 (11.17 percent).

Compulsory vaccination of large areas in Northern Italy has substantially modified the distribution of outbreaks in the country. In fact, only 11.40 percent of outbreaks during 1966 have been reported in the north of the country against 56.05 percent reported in the south; during 1964, the figures were 81.76 percent against 8.88 percent, respectively. The decrease in the incidence in the North, where the major part of the livestock populations kept, is changing favourably the overall situation in the country.

The 5 outbreaks which occurred during September in the North were in animals which had been transferred from other parts of Italy where mass vaccination has not as yet been applied.

It is planned to extend general vaccination to the entire Italian cattle population in 1967.

To avoid the introduction of the disease from other countries, ruminants which are to be imported into Italy are required to have undergone trivalent vaccination in their country of origin. When vaccination cannot be undertaken at the beginning of the travel, it is required to be done at the place of destination.

Netherlands

The foot-and-mouth disease epizootic 1965-66, caused by virus type C, was characterized by its highly virulent nature. Swine were mainly affected, but in many cases also cattle, including adult animals, contracted the disease. The infection, which started on 9 October at Limburg, extended only ten days later, to the province of North Brabant in the municipality of Deurne.

Despite the application of intense sanitary control measures and the vaccination of pigs with concentrated vaccine, it was impossible to confine the infection to south of the river Rhine. By the beginning of December, this natural barrier has already been crossed by the disease which spread over the whole province of Gelderland and penetrated deeply into the provinces of Utrecht, Overijssel and Drenthe.

As on other occasions, the main sanitary police measures consisted in bans of movement of animals from highly infected areas and the taking over by the Government of sick and infected animals which were destroyed. Attention was also given to disinfection measures.

Experience gained from extensive vaccination of pigs, using either normal or highly concentrated vaccines (10 cattle doses) formed the basis for the application of a new control method. The Director of Veterinary Services designated certain areas within which owners of pig-breeding farms could have their pigs voluntarily vaccinated against the disease at Government expense. The demand for vaccine made it necessary to procure vaccine from abroad. One and a half million doses of monovalent vaccines (C type) were used between mid-November and January 1966. Vaccination was carried out in an area with a radius of 2 miles around the outbreaks; the normal vaccine (dispensed in cattle doses) was injected twice, at a two-week interval.

Sick and suspect animals from infected farms were moved as rapidly as possible to rendering plants for destruction. Compliance with disinfection measures on the infected farms was closely supervised.

In mid-January 1966, the record number of 489 outbreaks was reached in one week in the Netherlands, 179 occurring in the province of Gelderland. After that, the epizootic declined fairly rapidly and since May, the country has again been free of the disease.

The application of the stamping-out policy involved the slaughter and destruction of 243,000 pigs and 3,496 cattle; 10,000,000 dollars were paid in compensation.

The cost of vaccination was 1,000,000 dollars and the losses to the Netherlands because of the bans on imports imposed by European countries for many months have been evaluated at approximately 10,000,000 dollars.

In discussing the measures adopted by several European countries concerning importations from countries infected by foot-and-mouth disease, stress was laid on the necessity for closer collaboration between the veterinary services of different countries in order to avoid as much as possible too serious an approach by certain countries towards adopting and maintaining bans of which some abuse may be made and which may not be applied purely to sanitary matters.

In this connection, it was pointed out by the Italian delegate that article IX of the EEC Regulations should be revised.

Denmark

After a long period of freedom from the disease, Denmark had its first outbreak on 21 February, and up to 23 May, there were 39, all caused by virus type O (O Lausanne). Both cattle and pigs were affected. Vaccine previously produced in Denmark with classical type O₂ virus was found to be ineffective against the new virus strain. Therefore, vaccine had to be purchased urgently from Austria, Switzerland, Italy and France before the production of the homologous vaccine could be commenced in Denmark. Ring vaccination was applied mainly around outbreaks; all exposed and infected pigs and all infected cattle were slaughtered. A total of 900 cattle, 2806 pigs and a few small ruminants were slaughtered and destroyed; 1,300,000 cattle were vaccinated on the islands and on the mainland. Compensation was paid in full and amounted to 2,400,000 Danish Kroner. The cost of vaccination, including salaries to veterinarians, was an additional 6,500,000 Danish Kroners. Since 23 May, no further outbreak has been recorded.

United Kingdom

After freedom from the disease for several years on 22 July, foot-and-mouth disease appeared in a herd of cattle and in sheep in Northumberland. Three further outbreaks were recorded almost immediately afterwards. A 10-mile stand-still area was set up around the infected region. The affected animals were immediately slaughtered and destroyed. More outbreaks were expected in the neighbourhood because of the intense livestock population. However, the disease jumped 8 miles to the East and North-East. Very strict measures were applied. Sixty veterinarians were moved into 3 local centres and movement of animals was strictly controlled within the area. In all, 32 outbreaks occurred, each caused by virus type O. The last outbreak occurred on 5 September and on 27 September, restrictions were removed.

Full compensation was paid for all animals; 5,500 cattle, 36,000 sheep and 600 pigs were slaughtered; the epizootic costs £1,000,000, not including costs of disinfection, amounting to about 10 percent of the total expense.

The carcasses were buried or, occasionally, burnt. Reporting was extremely good, and no difficulties were encountered with regard to the application of sanitary measures. However, difficulties of an economic nature arose, since the area where restrictions were enforced is a sheep-breeding and cattle-fattening area.

For a considerable period, lambs and cattle could not be sold or slaughtered in time. Restrictions were usually lifted 6 weeks after slaughter.

More recently, an outbreak in cattle was reported in Sussex. Material was sent to Pirbright and virus type A was recovered. There was no further spread, except one secondary case due to direct contact. No origin could be established.

Some discussion followed this report. The British delegate felt that in view of the drastic measures usually taken in UK, the introduction of detector animals before re-stocking is not necessary. The Danish delegate pointed out that in Denmark, permission to restock is given 30 days after disinfection of the infected premises and that only vaccinated animals are used for this purpose.

Austria

Austria has had only one outbreak since the last session of the Commission in March 1966. The disease was introduced from Bavaria and the outbreak was soon dealt with. The situation had been much more serious at the end of 1965 and in the beginning of 1966, when Austria had to control the disease on two frontiers, viz. at the borders with Hungary and with Switzerland.

When an outbreak occurs in Austria all the cattle, pigs, goats and sheep on the premises are taken in special trucks to special slaughterhouses; meat from them is sold only in urban centers.

The full estimated value of animals concerned is paid except for those found to be showing symptoms at the first visit when compensation amounting to 90 percent of the value is paid. Animals which contract the disease after the farm is closed are also paid for in full. Ring vaccination is carried out in an area with a radius to be determined on each occasion, in accordance with the local conditions. Vaccination of large animals cost 6 Austrian shillings. The vaccine which is produced at the Institute is the property of the Government.

In all, 400,000 cattle were vaccinated in Austria in 1966. No pigs have been vaccinated, since it was found that their importance in the spread of the disease was insignificant. As a rule, vaccination is ordered and paid for only under special circumstances by the Government. Vaccination at random, on the initiative of private livestock owners, is not permitted.

The Chairman and the Secretary gave additional information regarding the following countries, not represented at the meeting.

Switzerland

Switzerland has been free of foot-and-mouth disease since June 1966, after the completion of a very successful vaccination campaign.

Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany experienced a serious epizootic at the end of 1965 and the beginning of 1966, but gradually the incidence has become considerably decreased. The control of foot-and-mouth disease is no longer in the hands of the single Länder, but is coordinated by the Federal Veterinary Services at Bonn. The great tourist traffic out of Germany seems to be a potential danger for the neighbouring countries.

Hungary

Although it has been stated by the Veterinary authorities that there is no foot-and-mouth disease in the country, it would seem that the disease is still present in Hungary.

Greece

In June, Greece has a single but very dangerous outbreak in Thrace, caused by A₂₂ virus, a few kilometers from the Turkish border. The origin of the infection seemed to be smuggled animals from the Edirne province.

All affected and in-contact animals (including pigs) were slaughtered and destroyed and since then, Greece has been free from the disease.

Bulgaria

A few outbreaks occurred in a village near the buffer zone in Bulgarian Thrace. The incident was attributed to an unfortunate trial of a locally produced A₅ vaccine.

Cyprus

Cyprus has been free from foot-and-mouth disease for the past two years. All animals on the island have been vaccinated against virus A₂₂. Pigs were also vaccinated.

2. The foot-and-mouth disease position in South-Eastern Europe and the Near East.

The Secretary of the Commission gave a report on the campaign carried out in south-eastern Europe and the activities of the Secretariat in this connection. He explained the reasons for stopping the vaccination against the SAT₁ virus and the autumn campaign against virus A₂₂. All remaining financial resources will, in fact, be necessary for the re-establishment of the buffer zones in spring 1967, since Turkey will not be able to produce sufficient quantities of vaccine before the end of that year.

He gave an account also of the meeting held in Brussels in September by the FAO/EEC/OIE Consultative Committee and intimated the intention to hold a further meeting next spring in Ankara before any decision would be taken as to further financing the campaign.

The Delegate from Italy remarked that the work of the Commission for the campaign and the success obtained in halting the spread of the various epizootics at the south-eastern borders of Europe clearly demonstrated the value of the Commission and the benefits that Europe derives from the coordinated efforts of the European countries with regard to foot-and-mouth disease.

3. Surveys carried out by the Secretariat and future activities of the Commission

The Secretary gave an account of his visits, together with the Chairman of the Commission, to Bulgaria and Ethiopia, trips which were carried out to evaluate the potential hazards which derive from meat imported by Bulgaria from Ethiopia.

Some delegates pointed out that the importation of meat from Ethiopia, despite the good organization set up and all the precautions taken, cannot be considered as completely safe. Regret was also expressed that no initiative was taken in Ethiopia for the setting-up of disease-free areas where animals could be collected, observed and possibly vaccinated against foot-and-mouth disease during the quarantine period. It was also emphasized that most of the risks could be avoided if the meat were sufficiently cooked before shipment.

The Secretary reported on the meeting of the Research Group of the Commission held at Pirbright on 12-14 September (see attachment). He pointed out that with the meeting at Pirbright, a group of meetings had now been concluded (Amsterdam 1964, Lyons 1965, and Pirbright 1966) which enabled the Research Group to investigate some problems of much importance for European laboratories, viz:-

1. The control of foot-and-mouth disease vaccines;
2. The use of guineapigs and other small laboratory animals for efficacy tests of foot-and-mouth disease vaccines;
3. Cultivation of foot-and-mouth disease vaccine in suspended cells;
4. Vaccination of pigs;
5. Vaccination of sheep.

The contribution made by many research workers from European non-Member Countries of the Commission and of the Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory, U.S.A., to the meetings of the Commission's Research Group is evidenced and illustrated by the reports of the three above-mentioned meetings and the papers presented, almost all of which have been reproduced and distributed.

The Executive Committee was informed of the intention of the Research Group to meet next year at the Plum Island (U.S.A.) Laboratory in order to have an exchange of views between European and American Research workers and possibly to coordinate research work; this was approved.

Finally, the Secretary reported on the meeting held in Beirut on 27-30 September for the study of the problems connected with the traffic in animals and meat in the near East region. The meeting offered an excellent occasion to the Near East countries to take an increasing interest in the control of the main epizootics, including foot-and-mouth disease and a more efficient control of importation, and to FAO to encourage the development of efficient efforts to protect the Near East region against further invasions of exotic viruses.

4. Administrative matters - Revision of scale of contribution

The question of increasing the contributions of Commission Member-countries was again discussed. It was generally felt that, since the contributions have not been raised for the past 12 years, a proposal should be made at the next Session for the increase of the contributions by about 20-25 percent.

5. Any other business

The Delegate from Denmark stated that when the danger of A₂₂ virus spreading to Europe became evident, his country ordered 200,000 doses of homologous vaccine from Teheran. Next year, the validity of this stock will be about to expire and there may be a possibility of his Government agreeing to the vaccine being used for the spring vaccination campaign in Turkey.

It was decided that unless any new emergencies arise, the Committee will hold its next meeting in Rome on 13 March 1967, i.e. the day before the XIVth Session.