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Agricultural Office
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File: US/MKZ
Ref 8514

FAX TRANSMITTAL

Date: April 26, 2001 Number of page(s): 11 (incl. cover)
From: Mr. Jan P. Adriansens
To: Dr. Craig A. Reed - APHIS Administrator Fax: 202.720.3054

Re: FMD

Dear Dr. Reed:

Please find enclosed a copy of Mr. Adriansens' letter reference 8514 and dated from today. For your information, please note that we also send you today a copy by mail.

Sincerely yours,

Nathalie Le Duc
Assistant to the Agricultural Counselor

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-99) 4-27-01

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EMBASSY
OF
BELGIUM



Agricultural Office
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Craig A. Reed
Administrator
APHIS-USDA
Room 313-E Whitten Bldg
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Our File: US/FMD
Ref nr. 8514

April 26th, 2001

Dear Dr. Reed:

For several weeks now APHIS has been applying to Belgium and other EU countries Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions while Belgium is still free of FMD. Belgian authorities share the important goal of doing everything possible to keep the country free of FMD.

At the FMD outbreak in the UK, and even before the FMD outbreak in France, the Belgian authorities have implemented fully and immediately the legislation and have applied all precaution measures in order to keep FMD out of Belgium. The Belgian measures have been successfully implemented and at this date the FMD status without vaccination is still unchanged. No outbreak has been reported since 1976.

The Belgian measures are well known to the Aphis people in Brussels. You have been kept fully informed about all developments. Aphis people in Brussels are informed directly by the Belgian authorities, by the EU standing veterinary committee and the media. I hope that you understand that I have no elements available to explain to the Belgian authorities the rationale behind the restrictions applied to Belgium and other FMD free European countries.

Attached you find a memo on the preventive measures taken by Belgium in relation to FMD. I am looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

ir. Jan P. Adriansens
Agricultural Counselor

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KONINKRIJK BELGIE - ROYAUME DE BELGIQUE



Ministry of Small Enterprises, Traders and Agriculture
Ministère des Classes moyennes et de l'Agriculture
Ministerium für Mittelstand und Landwirtschaft
Ministerie van Middenstand en Landbouw

**PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY BELGIUM IN
RELATION TO FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**

MEMORANDUM

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The purpose of this memorandum is to establish a basis for an up-to-date assessment of the measures to prevent that foot-and-mouth disease will spread to Belgium.

It should be underlined that the FMD free status without vaccination of Belgium is unchanged. No outbreak of FMD has been reported in the Belgian livestock since 1976.

The EU legislation has been implemented fully and immediately. The entire Belgian veterinary control and surveillance system is continuously on the alert, and precaution measures will be maintained until the FMD-situation in other EU member states is normalized. Veterinary authorities, other authorities, industry and farmers' organizations are in close contact, and information is communicated continuously. All necessary precautionary measures to prevent the introduction of FMD to Belgium have been taken.

Field veterinarians have received instructions on mandatory actions in case of FMD suspicion on a Belgian farm and are enforced to report immediately any signs of disease to the Belgian Veterinary Administration.

The Belgian policy regarding outbreaks of FMD in neighboring countries is guided by the following principles:

1/ Preventive culling of all imported animals which could represent risk because of unclear clinical symptoms if infected (sheep) or which were imported in an assessed risk rate from a affected zone abroad.

2/ Intensive surveillance of the other susceptible animals imported from the concerned countries.

3/ Restriction on movement of live cloven-hoofed animals

Movement of live cloven-hoofed animals within Belgium is restricted and kept under close supervision by the veterinary authorities. Additionally, movement of sheep was prohibited since 24/02/01. Transport of sheep to slaughterhouse was allowed under strict conditions since 20/03/01. Transport to another farm is allowed under strict conditions (preliminary serology) since 24/04/01.

All vehicles transporting live cloven-hoofed animals are cleansed and disinfected after each transport.

Markets and assemblies of live cloven-hoofed animals or animals having had contact with cloven-hoofed animals is prohibited.

4/ Contacts between farms are kept at a strict minimum

Farmers with cloven-hoofed animals are enforced to keep visits to the farms at an absolute minimum. Visits by veterinarians and other persons can only take place under strict and specific guidelines. Changing of clothes, washing, and disinfection are always required.

All persons who have been directly or indirectly in contact with live cloven-hoofed animals in an affected country may not have contact with such animals during seven days after their return in Belgium.

Farmers should keep logbooks on all visitors to farms such as veterinarians, inseminators, food suppliers, technicians or guests.

Direct import of feed, straw and hay from EU member states which declared outbreaks of FMD, to farms with cloven-hoofed animals is prohibited.

Import of food by individuals for self-catering from countries with declared FMD outbreaks is forbidden. A strict control on the collection and destruction of waste food from ships and airplanes in ports and airports has been enhanced.

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5/ Control on imported of products of animal origin from affected countries:

From the moment that a first case of FMD was declared in a member state, the meat and meat products imported in an assessed risk rate and at that moment present in Belgian slaughterhouses, cooling-units and cutting plants was seized (lamb and sheep : 5 T; bovine 282 kg pig-meat 74T - pig-meat products 12 T)

6/ Imports into Belgium

Prohibitions for import of live cloven-hoofed animals, semen and embryos from (France), the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland and restrictions with regard to their products according to the EU rules (measures with regard to France (Mad on 14/04/2001);

The Veterinary Administration has to authorize any import of live cloven-hoofed animals into Belgium from other countries. Clearly, any import that constitutes a risk of spreading FMD will not be allowed.

Permanent border controls (with limitation of the number of border-posts) by local and federal police and customs, and this in close cooperation with the veterinary services are installed.

Import tracing from affected countries in the likelihood of disease risk has been carried out by means of the ANIMO livestock registration system and the national identification and registration system SANITEL.

7/ Reporting and testing

Antigen and antibody tests are referable to the Diagnostic Manual of the OIE and are performed by the national reference laboratory CERVA Croeselenberg 99, Ukkel, Belgium

The time required from detection to the definitive conclusion of diagnostic analyses doesn't exceed 7 days :

a/ reporting suspected symptoms to veterinarian of the farm		
b/ reporting suspicion to local veterinarian inspector		
c/ reporting to central service		by telephone
d/ transport of sampled material to national laboratory		2 hrs
e/ definitive conclusion of diagnostic analysis	AG Elisa	6 hrs
	Virus isolation	4 days

8/ Belgian law into force // Belgian law into force

A complete review of the Belgian legislation concerning special measures FMD is available on our Web-site <http://www.omlae.fgov.be/>

Actually : Ministerial decree of 19/04/2001

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Serology in farms under official surveillance and in slaughterhouses

	AB-Elisa	Ag-Elisa	Virology
Sheep	3154	1605	1854
Goat	77	75	78
Bovine	88	32	48
Pork	132	402	401
TOTAL	3451	2074	2181

Number of tests with confirmed negative results

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Preventive measures in relation to the FMD situation in the UK

1/ Movements of live animals of susceptible species from the UK to Belgium
(1 February 2001 - 21 February 2001)

	NUMBER of consignments	NUMBER of animals from the UK	FARMS under surveillance (*)
PIGS	14	456 breeding pigs	13
SHEEP	3	914 sheep for fattening	15
GOATS	1	12 breeding goats	1

(*) An additional number of farms were put under surveillance because of indirect contacts via the Netherlands. The total number of farms under surveillance was : 22 pig-farms, 1 goat-farm and 25 sheep-farms.

2/ Procedure in farms where sheep and goats from the UK have been introduced since 1/02/01

Farms where sheep or goats from the UK have been introduced since 1 February 2001, were subject to preventive slaughter and destruction of all the animals of these species present on the farm.

Preventive slaughter of animals of susceptible species

2.1. Pre-emptive culling of sheep, goats imported from the UK, or animals of other susceptible species and contacts with UK susceptible animals from the UK :

date of sanitary killing	number of farms	Number of animals killed				total
		Sheep	Goats	Lamas	other	
01/03	3	1262	19	3	9	1293
02/03	0	723	0	0	0	723
03/03	3	174 (*)	0	0	1 deer 501 pigs (*)	676
05/03	2	243	22	0	0	265
06/03	1	554	2	4	0	560
07/03	1	190	0	0	0	190
08/03	3	137	295	0	0	432
09/03	2	307	0	0	0	307
14/03 (**)	5	181	0	0	0	181
15/03 (**)	1	488	0	0	0	488
Total	27	4239	336	7	511	5095

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Situation on 19/03/2001

(*) : pre-emptive culling of all pigs in a pig farm in the municipality of Diksmuide (province 0030 = Western Flanders). This action was also completed with the pre-emptive killing of 8 sheep in the immediate neighbourhood of the pig-farm. All diagnostic tests on FMD or SVD were negative.

(**) : neighbourhood of a (sheep) staging point

(***) : sheep imported from the Netherlands originating from a farm subject to pre-emptive killing of the sheep

2.2. Sheep and goats present in slaughterhouses:

Due to the movement ban for sheep and goats since 24 February 2001 and the total ban of slaughter of sheep and goats on 2 March 2001, preventive killing of all sheep has also been carried out in 8 slaughterhouses where these animals were still present. This operation was carried out on 5 and 7 March 2001.

Date of preventive killing	number of slaughterhouses	number of sheep killed
5/03 and 7/03	8	1329

3/ Procedure in the farms under surveillance

Pig farms are controlled clinically every 4 days, during a period of at least 3 weeks. Farms with sheep and goats are controlled clinically every 4 days and serologically every 13 days (max. 60 samples) during a period of at least 4 weeks.

The same measures are in place in farms with animals which had contact (markets, fairs, dealer) with animals of susceptible species from the UK.

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Preventive measures in relation to the FMD situation in France

1/ Tracing back movements of live animals of susceptible species from France

trade from France to Belgium > 15/02/2001	Number of live biungulates introduced (or re-introduced)	FARMS under surveillance (*) on 13 and 14 March 2001	
		number	Provinces concerned
CATTLE	152	21	0022, 0030, 0040, 0050, 0060, 0070, 0080, 0090
PIGS	534	13 (*)	0022, 0030, 0050, 0080
SHEEP	0	-	
GOATS	0	-	
Other biungulates	0	-	
TOTAL	686	34	

(*) one consignment of 50 breeding pigs was dispatched from the Dep. of Mayenne (Fr) on 14/03/2001 to a farm in the province of Western Flanders.
One additional farm with sheep was put under surveillance as the farmer is a dealer with activities in France (all 27 sheep have been culled).

2/ Surveillance on the farms.

The FMD expert group decided not to advise pre-emptive killing of the imported cattle and pigs. The procedure in farms under surveillance is basically the same as described for farms with animals of susceptible species from the UK.

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Preventive measures in relation to the FMD situation in the Netherlands

**1/ Movements of live animals of susceptible species from the Netherlands to Belgium
(> 20 February 2001)**

Species		TOTAL 20/02-22/03		07/03-22/03	
		number of consignments	Number of animals	Number of consignments	Number of animals
Pigs	Production pigs	136	15548	128	26051
	Slaughter pigs	237	44708	75	2688
	Total	373 (*)	60254	201	28739
Cattle	Cattle for slaughter	2	26	0	0
	Cattle for production	12	511	3	52
	Total	14	537	3	52
Sheep	Sheep for slaughter	8	862	0	0
	Sheep for production	12	1927	0	0
	Total	20	2792	0	0

Since the notification of the FMD outbreak in Mayenne (France) at the SVC on 13 March 2001, the Netherlands maintained a complete stand-still of susceptible species on their territory.

2/ Procedure in the farms under surveillance

All farms with animals of susceptible species originating from the Netherlands and introduced since 20 February were put under surveillance.

The procedures have been adapted following epidemiological information received from the Netherlands

Pigs or cattle :

- Surveillance during 5 weeks following the introduction date
- Clinical examination every 4 days, with a minimum of 2 clinical examinations

Sheep (or goats)

- Surveillance during 6 weeks following the introduction date
- Serology: every 8 days of the animals present in the farm according to the criteria: 1-80 animals: all animals are sampled
> 80 animals: 60 animals at random

The decision for preventive killing meets the following criteria:

- Date of introduction ; > 7 March 2001
- Farm of origin located in one of the surveillance zones

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3/ Pro-omative killing of animals

date	farms	province	total number of pigs	date of import	number of pigs imported
21/03/2001	1	90	996	08/03/2001	5 consignments 996 pigs 2 consignments (201 + 175 pigs) from the zone
22/03/2001	1	40	570	07/03/2001	4 consignments 1 sending (80 pigs) from the zone
23/03/2001	1	30	1265	13/03/2001	2 consignments, 1 consignment (460 piglets) from the zone
24/03/2001	1	10	420 (+ 24 own cattle)	07/03/2001	1 consignment

Conclusion :

It is absolutely clear that all the implementations of the measures to prevent the spread of FMD from neighbouring or other countries affected by FMD were strict and successful. Belgium meets all the EU and international standards to be considered as a country free from FMD without vaccination. There are no scientific or legal reasons to put this status into doubt. Every measure imposing an embargo on Belgian animals or products is therefore not in accordance with international standards.

We therefore ask all countries which have imposed a ban on Belgian animals or products to lift this ban.

Brussels 26th of April 2001

Dr L. LENGELE
Chief Veterinary Officer

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