



JUL 13 2001

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Dr. K. Lukauskas
State Food and Veterinary Service
Siesiku g. 19
LT-2010 Vilnius
Lithuania

Dear Dr. Lukauskas:

This is a response to the information you provided to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in support of your request to be recognized as free from foot and mouth disease (FMD). We appreciate the thoroughness of your reply. However, APHIS needs additional information before we can complete our review.

We were unable to establish exactly what animals and/or products you wish to export to the United States, although we understand that your primary interest is that APHIS recognize your country as free from FMD. Therefore, that disease will be the major focus of these comments. However, to ensure that FMD is the sole disease of concern that might affect your exports, please identify specifically the commodities that you would like to export to the United States.

The rest of our request is organized according to the 11 topics (see attached) listed in the APHIS document, "Clarification of Information Requested for Recognition of a Region." We would appreciate your response to each of the categories.

Following our evaluation of the information you have provided and will provide, APHIS, Veterinary Services usually schedules a site visit for verification of our evaluation. APHIS then conducts a risk assessment and proposes appropriate changes in its regulations to incorporate the results of the evaluation.

We look forward to working with you during this process.

Sincerely,

/s/ John R. Clifford

~~Alfonso Torres~~
Deputy Administrator
Veterinary Services

Enclosure



APHIS - Protecting American Agriculture
An Equal Opportunity Employer

Dr. K. Lukauskas

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cc:

- Agricultural Minister-Counselor
- FAS Area Officer, FAS, Washington, DC
- J. Reddington, FAS, Washington, DC
- L. Harbert, FAS, Washington, DC
- A. Cielo, IS, Washington, DC
- D. Sheesley, IS, Brussels, Belgium
- F. Hamdy, VS, Riverdale, MD
- A. Goodman, VS, Riverdale, MD
- G. Colgrove, VS, Riverdale, MD

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TOPIC 1. AUTHORITY, ORGANIZATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF VETERINARY SERVICES

What are the specific roles and responsibilities of government and private veterinarians in FMD surveillance and control? What educational and certification requirements must be met by government and private veterinarians who participate in FMD surveillance and control? What legislation or policy provides their regulatory authority and defines their responsibility? What enforcement powers are in place?

Does Lithuania prohibit garbage feeding? If so, what authority does it follow, and how is that authority enforced?

TOPIC 2. DISEASE STATUS

According to the information you provided, FMD was last detected in Lithuania in 1982. What was the incidence of FMD in Lithuania prior to 1982? What FMD virus type was detected?

How was FMD eradicated from Lithuania? Was serology conducted on farms with "backyard" animals near the border with Belarus and Kaliningrad? If so, what was the protocol for sampling and what test procedure was used?

How might geographic and environmental characteristics of Lithuania influence the prevalence of FMD if it were to reoccur?

TOPIC 3. DISEASE STATUS OF ADJACENT REGIONS

We note that FMD is not present in the bordering countries of Poland or Latvia. However, Lithuania also shares borders with the Republic of Belarus and the Region of Kaliningrad. What is the FMD status of these regions?

When was the last occurrence of FMD in each region adjacent to Lithuania? What FMD virus type was detected? Are you aware of geographic and environmental characteristics in the regions adjacent to Lithuania that might influence the risk of FMD reoccurring in Lithuania? If so, what are they and what is their overall effect?

TOPIC 4. DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAM

Please provide copies (in English) of: (1) Adopted Instruction No 4-199 of State Food and Veterinary Service of 15 November 1996, (2) Order No 4-69a of State Food and Veterinary Service of 30 March 1998 on contingency measures upon the outbreak of FMD, and (3) Order No 4-283 of State Food and Veterinary Service of 27 October 1999 on the requirements for prophylactics and diagnostics of FMD.

TOPIC 5. VACCINATION STATUS

The documentation you provided states that cattle vaccination ended in 1985. Were other species vaccinated for FMD at that time?

According to your response in Section 9, vaccination was prohibited in 1984. Please clarify when the last vaccination occurred in Lithuania for each relevant species.

TOPIC 6. SEPARATION FROM HIGHER RISK REGIONS

We note that there are large forests in the eastern and northern parts of the country that separate Lithuania from adjacent countries of higher risk. What FMD susceptible free-ranging species live in the forest?

TOPIC 7. MOVEMENT CONTROL AND BIOSECURITY FROM HIGHER RISK REGIONS

Please provide a copy (in English) of Veterinary Requirements No. 3, ratified on 11 February 1992.

From what countries does Lithuania import animals and products that could carry FMD (regardless of the current FMD status of the exporting country)? Which of these countries do you currently consider to present a higher level of FMD risk than Lithuania? If recent data are available on the quantities of these imports by country, please provide them.

What quantity of these animals or products is inspected or tested each year? What inspection procedures are followed? What testing is conducted? What quarantine restrictions apply? Are the inspections random or targeted? If they are targeted, what is the approach? What, if any, border posts lack veterinary inspection? What proportion of travelers is inspected for possible possession of illegal agricultural products at border control points?

What quantity of products that could carry FMD virus is seized at the border control points?

Where are the border posts, seaports, and airports through which imported products are located? A map showing the roads and the names of the posts would be helpful. How are these posts staffed (e.g., number of employees and level of veterinary supervision, if any)? What is the source of financial support for these control posts?

What degree of harmony does Lithuania have with Poland, Latvia, the Republic of Belarus, and Kaliningrad with regard to (a) import requirements from FMD affected regions and (b) transit of animal products?

What testing is done for animals and animal products entering Lithuania from other countries? What, if any, quarantine restrictions apply to imported animals?

TOPIC 8. LIVESTOCK DEMOGRAPHICS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

Livestock population data for Lithuania were provided. How are these populations distributed geographically throughout the country? If possible, please provide a map of the geographic distribution of these populations.

Where are the major livestock marketing centers located in Lithuania? If possible, please identify these on a map. How are animals transported and handled during transport? What provisions are in place for animal identification and tracability?

From what areas of the country would livestock or products intended for export to the United States originate? Are livestock and products inspected and/or tested at facilities producing product for export? What biosecurity procedures in place at those facilities?

What proportion of livestock populations in Lithuania originate from subsistence-type (backyard-type) and what proportion from commercial populations? What differences between smaller subsistence-type herds or flocks and larger commercial herds or flocks in terms of marketing, movement, husbandry practices, or biosecurity procedures are relevant to the risk of disease agents being exported to other countries, and what is their influence?

Please describe any relevant changes or trends expected in these livestock demographics in coming years.

TOPIC 9. DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Please provide copies (in English) of the Law on Veterinary Activities of the Republic of Lithuania No. 1-2100 passed on 17 December 1991 and Law No. VIII - 1350 Amending the Law on Veterinary Activities adopted on 7 October 1999.

What type and extent of disease surveillance is conducted in Lithuania? How is FMD monitored? Are sampling protocols available, and what is the statistical significance of the sampling? Are surveillance programs active or passive?

For what animal health conditions is reporting mandatory? What is the reporting procedure (by whom and to whom)? What penalties are involved for failure to report? How many animal health investigations were conducted in the past year, last season, per month, or per week?

Are samples from suspect animals subjected to laboratory tests? If so, what test procedures are used? How many clinical submissions are processed by the laboratory each year to rule out the presence of FMD in Lithuania? In what other ways are diseased animals detected?

Are quarantines imposed on premises with suspicious cases, pending final diagnosis? What other procedures are followed when suspicious cases are observed?

Has FMD surveillance been conducted in the wildlife in the region? If so, please provide copies of any data that have been collected along with a description of the surveillance methods such as tests used, the sampling protocol, and criteria for reporting results.

TOPIC 10. DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY CAPABILITIES

What diagnostic capability is available in Lithuania? Where are tests conducted for List A diseases and FMD?

What tests does the National Veterinary Laboratory perform to detect FMD? Is the laboratory, or any of its departments, approved or accredited to conduct serology, isolate FMD virus, identify and type the virus, and/or characterize the pathogenicity of the virus? If so, who provides the approval or accreditation? If not, where would serological tests be performed; where would the virus be isolated, identified, typed, and characterized?

What biosecurity measures are in place in the laboratory and its departments to prevent escape of biological agents? What is the level of diagnostic training provided to individuals who work with the FMD virus and other viruses?

TOPIC 11. EMERGENCY RESPONSE CAPABILITY

What procedures are in place to identify outbreaks of FMD should they occur? Please provide a more detailed description of the VETLEX system.

What other policies, procedures, legislative authority, and infrastructure exist for emergency response to FMD outbreaks? What measures would be taken if an outbreak was suspected or confirmed?

By whom are relevant rules, laws, regulations, or policies issued and under what circumstances? How quickly could they be implemented and by whom?

What enforcement activities take place prior to such implementation? What resources are available specifically for the purpose of implementing emergency response procedures?

How rapidly would the international community be informed of suspicions or confirmations of FMD?

Please give your best estimate, and the evidence or reasoning to support it, of the amount of time it would take to detect the presence of FMD should it be reintroduced into Lithuania.

How much additional time would be required after detection to stop exports of animals and products that could carry FMD? Please describe how these exports would be stopped.