

Protective measures against foot and mouth disease in France

1 – Measures targeting livestock at risk.

1.1 – Veterinary investigations.

a) Animals originating in the United Kingdom

As early as 21 February 2001, using the ANIMO system, an investigation was undertaken into movements involving the introduction of susceptible animal species into France since 15 January 2001. The information thus gathered revealed that 23 agricultural holdings had been the initial destinations of deliveries of sheep from the United Kingdom. These farms, scattered throughout 17 French territorial *départements*, had thus introduced 60 batches of livestock, 19,660 sheep in total. Tracking of the movements of these animals on French territory from their initial destinations made it possible:

- to determine that approximately 10,000 of the animals had been slaughtered before 21 February: their carcasses were seized and subsequently destroyed or sent back to the UK;

and

- to identify, firstly, 58 farms holding sheep originating in the UK (of the 23 that had been the initial destinations of deliveries, 22 were still holding sheep of British provenance; 36 farms had been secondary destinations of such livestock) and, secondly, a single farm in possession of a pig from the United Kingdom.

Additionally, the results of an enquiry carried out by the Dutch veterinary authorities into the movements of UK-originated sheep brought into the Netherlands since 1st February and sent on from that country to other Member States, led to identification of 19

other livestock farms that had received deliveries of animals "at risk", located in 14 French territorial *départements*: in all, 37 batches of livestock, or 9,372 sheep in total, had thus been introduced into France.

Consequently, sheep originating in the United Kingdom had been delivered to locations in 25 French territorial *départements*.

The following preventive steps were taken on all farms holding animals "at risk":

- each farm was quarantined and a clinical examination carried out on its livestock;
- sheep of British provenance were culled on site, along with all animals of susceptible species in contact with the UK-originated livestock;
- burial on site or incineration of the carcasses of culled livestock;
- blood samples were taken from 10% of the culled animals of British origin (a minimum of 30 samples per group of livestock); these were sent to AFSSA (the French national laboratory of reference) for serological and viral testing;
- livestock of non-susceptible species present on holdings where culling has taken place were quarantined for 7 days from the date on which the last animal has been slaughtered.

b) Animals originating in the Netherlands

As soon as the first outbreak of the disease in the Netherlands was reported on 21 March, an investigation, using the ANIMO system, was undertaken into movements involving the introduction of susceptible animal species into France since 20 February 2001. The information thus gathered revealed that 15 787 animals were delivered to France from 20 February to 5 March 2001 (date of shipment of the last batch of Dutch susceptible animal species to France) :

- 8 938 animals (7 465 pigs, 1 463 sheep – goats and 10 cattle) to be delivered to slaughterhouses located in 15 French territorial *départements*;
- 6 849 animals (4 754 pigs, 1 792 sheep and 303 cattle) to be delivered to farms located in 16 French territorial *départements*.

The farms holding animals at risk were subjected to protective measures mentioned in paragraph 1.1.a).

c) Animals originating in Ireland

The investigation carried out as soon as the first outbreak of the disease in Ireland was reported on 22 March, revealed that 1 254 susceptible animal species were delivered to France from 20 February to 2 March 2001 (date of shipment of the last batch of Irish susceptible animal species to France – 1 March 2001, an official order was signed banning the introduction of susceptible animal species from Ireland into France) :

- 984 animals to be delivered to 4 holdings located in 3 French territorial *départements*;
- 270 animals to be delivered to a slaughterhouse.

The holdings associated with these deliveries have been subjected to the protective measures mentioned in paragraph 1.1.a).

1.2 – Results of enquiries in progress (update to 30 April 2001).

a) Results of serological tests in progress

a-1 Risk associated with livestock of UK origin

As of the present date, 49,315 animals (20,621 sheep and 1 pig of British provenance, 27,507 "contact" sheep, 537 "contact" cattle, 364 pigs and 197 "contact" goats) have been culled on 104 farms in 37 French *départements*. (note : the decrease in relation to the latest updating of the number of farms and French *départements* is linked to errors of double counting : in fact, some batches of livestock had initially been counted as belonging to 2 farms whereas they belonged to one and the same livestock farm).

5,076 blood samples have been taken and the latest results notified by AFSSA as of 1 April 2001 are as follows:

- 5,048 tested negative from 172 farms;
- 28 tested positive using ELISA on 6 farms which had been holding sheep from the United Kingdom.

These tests were conducted by AFSSA initially by using serum neutralisation alone, and subsequently combined, from 12 March 2001 onwards, with the ELISA technique, which enabled a number of false positives to be detected, thus reducing the number of infected premises to six.

All livestock at risk belonging to susceptible species on these farms were slaughtered.

Around these premises, 3-kilometre firebreaks were defined by order of the *Préfecture*. These have all been lifted.

a-2 Risk associated with animals from the Netherlands

As of the present date, 8,653 animals (131 cattle, 3,477 pigs and 505 small ruminants of Dutch origin as well as 451 cattle, 2,602 pigs and 1, 487 "contact" small ruminants) have been culled on 13 farms in 10 French *départements*. (Note : the decrease in relation to the previous updating of the number of animals concerned is linked to the fact that some animals initially considered as being of Dutch origin were in fact of British origin ; the latter have been added to the figures in § 1.2.a-1)

328 blood samples taken from these animals were tested by AFSSA. The latest results show that 328 tests conducted on 7 farms have proved negative.

b) Results of notified clinically suspect cases

Since the application of reinforced surveillance measures aimed at foot and mouth disease, 154 "clinically suspect cases" have been officially notified to the veterinary authorities in 51 *départements*.

To date, 121 of these have been eliminated with respect to livestock showing no clinical

signs indicative of foot and mouth.

In the cases of the 33 other farms, which are located throughout the country, samples have been taken and sent for testing to AFSSA, the French food safety agency.

At the present time, with the exception of the confirmed outbreak on two farms respectively in the Mayenne and Seine et Marne areas, suspicions have proved groundless for the other 31 premises.

1.3 – Information on the outbreaks of foot and mouth disease .

a) Outbreak notified to the OIE on 13 March 2001

a-1) Chronological summary of the measures taken against the disease

Following the discovery of six cattle presenting a clinical picture indicative of foot and mouth on 12 March 2001 on a farm in the territorial *département* of Mayenne, samples were taken and the six animals slaughtered immediately. Since the initial results of the analyses done by AFSSA at Maisons-Alfort were found to be positive, the 114 dairy cows and young bulls on the holding were all culled during the night of 12-13 March, and their carcasses were destroyed on site by incineration.

The infection was due to proximity to sheep imported from the United Kingdom.

The sheep concerned, held on a livestock holding 500 metres away from the farm, were slaughtered and then destroyed (in addition to all contact livestock) on 27 February. These animals came from British case 11 (Llancloudy, Hereford).

The triggering of the foot and mouth alert plan by the Mayenne *Préfecture* led to the setting up of a firebreak zone (3 kilometres deep) and a control zone (10 kilometres deep) around the infected premises, as laid down in EU and national regulatory provisions.

In addition, two pig farms (with a total of 2,500 animals) located within the area of potential airborne spread of the virus were culled and destroyed as a preventive measure during the day on 14 March 2001. Furthermore, swine from these two farms which had been transferred to other holdings were also slaughtered for prudential reasons. Thus, a total number of 3223 pigs was slaughtered.

The EU Standing Veterinary Committee, meeting on 13 March, resolved to take special steps with regard to France. Decision 2001/208/CE of 14 March 2001 thus provides for the following measures:

- Steps identical to those imposed in the United Kingdom were taken with respect to the *départements* of Mayenne and Orne: a ban on all movements of livestock belonging to susceptible species (ruminants, swine), as well as their genetic material (semen, ovum, embryo), and animal products taken from them (unless harvested from animals slaughtered before 16 February, or from livestock raised and slaughtered outside these two *départements*, or if the material concerned has been treated to inactivate the foot and mouth virus).

In addition, it was made obligatory to cleanse and disinfect all vehicles used to transport livestock in these *départements* systematically after each use.

- All other metropolitan French *départements* were made subject to a ban on the movement of livestock belonging to susceptible species or their genetic material

(shipment to other Member States and exports to third countries). In this connection, it is noteworthy that restrictions on the movement of susceptible species had been suspended since 8 March 2001, except for transfers to slaughterhouses.

- Moreover, it was made mandatory for trucks collecting milk from farms holding animals belonging to susceptible species to be cleansed and disinfected before leaving French territory.

At its meeting on 20 March, the EU Standing Veterinary Committee decided to authorise the movement of fresh untreated meat from the *départements* of Orne and Mayenne for processing in another French *département*.

a-2) Firebreak and surveillance zones

a-2-1) Firebreak zone (3 km around the infected premises)

This zone included the infected premises themselves (114 cattle) as well as 112 cattle farms, 19 ovine farms and 4 pig farms in the Mayenne *département*.

Cleansing and disinfection work of the infected farm was finished on 23 March.

The 135 farms had follow-up visits for clinical examination carried out on the animals present on the premises (323 follow-up visits). No clinical symptoms indicative of foot and mouth disease was detected.

Blood samples were taken from all the animals on the 19 ovine farms for serological testing (196 blood samples were taken). All the results turned out to be negative.

The firebreak zone was therefore lifted last 7 April.

a-2-2) Surveillance zone (10 km around the infected premises)

This zone included:

In the Mayenne *département*, 254 cattle farms, 82 ovine and goat farms, 9 pig farms and 1 cervidae farm.

The livestock in the firebreak zone had follow-up visits for clinical examination on the animals and the results turned out to be favourable (831 follow-up visits).

Moreover, blood samples were taken from all the sheep and goats in this zone between 17 and 20 April, that is 936 blood samples from the 118 farms in the surveillance zone. All the results of the tests are negative.

The surveillance zone was therefore lifted on 23 April 2001.

b) Outbreak notified to the OIE on 23 March 2001

b-1) Chronological summary of the measures taken against the disease.

On 23 March an outbreak of foot and mouth disease was detected on a farm in the Seine-et-Marne *département*. Suspicion was aroused by a calf presenting the signs indicative of the infection. Samples were immediately taken and sent to AFSSA for viral tests, which yielded positive results that same evening.

The farm's 120 cattle, 200 sheep and 10 swine were immediately culled and a foot and mouth alert was sent out by the Seine-et-Marne *Préfecture*. Firebreak (3 kilometres) and control (10 kilometres) zones were set up around the farm concerned, as is laid down in EU and national regulations.

This case was discovered following investigation in the Mayenne *département* by the *Gendarmerie*, which established on 22 March that the holding at the origin of the Mayenne outbreak had, on 26 February, sent sheep which had been in contact with British sheep to the Seine-et-Marne premises.

Moreover 1,232 sheep linked in epidemiological terms to the outbreak of the Seine et Marne region have been slaughtered as a preventive measure.

For precautionary reasons, while awaiting more epidemiological data, the Ministry of Agriculture decided to restrict, from 24 March at 8 a.m., all trade and movement of products from animals at risk. This meant that in addition to the ban on shipment of livestock of susceptible species already in force since 8 March last, a prohibition was placed on all shipments out of France of meat and meat-based products, milk and dairy products which had not been heat treated to inactivate the foot and mouth virus.

The Standing Veterinary Committee, at its meeting of 27 March, issued a favourable ruling on an amendment to decision 2001/208/CE of 14 March 2001 (cf. point 1-3 a)), which provides as follows:

- until 2 April 2001, the whole of metropolitan France shall be covered by a ban on exports of all products (meat, meat-based products, milk and dairy products) which have not been heat treated in order to inactivate the foot and mouth virus, in addition to all livestock of susceptible species, and their semen, ova and embryos;
- from 2 April 2001 onwards, these restrictions shall apply solely to the territorial *départements* of Seine-et-Marne, Val d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis if no further cases of the infection have appeared.

This amended decision shall apply until 12 April next.

Considering the favourable development of the French health situation where the foot and mouth disease is concerned and in accordance with the decision approved by the Standing Veterinary Committee at its meeting of 27 March, the Commission has confirmed the partial lifting of the untreated animal products and products of animal origin (meat products, milk and by-products) from 3 April. Only the French territorial *départements* of Seine et Marne, Val d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis are still covered by the restricting measures to the trade of untreated products.

Since April 13 0 hours, all communal particular measures of restriction of movement of the living animals and applied product exchanges to France are raised.

b-2) Firebreak and surveillance zones

b-2-1 Firebreak zone (3 km around the infected premises)

This zone included the infected premises themselves (119 cattle, 147 ovine and 10 pigs) as

well as 3 ovine farms and 1 cattle farm.

Cleansing and disinfection work of the infected farm was finished on 6 April.

The 4 farms had follow-up visits for clinical examination on the animals present on the premises (6 visits). No clinical symptom indicative of foot and mouth disease was detected.

Blood samples were taken from all the animals on the 3 ovine farms for serological testing (32 blood samples). All the results turned out to be negative.

The firebreak zone was therefore lifted on 21 April 2001.

b-2-2) Surveillance zone (10 km around the infected premises)

This zone included:

- in the Seine-et-Marne *département*, 7 cattle farms, 31 ovine and goat farms and 5 pig farms;
- in the Seine-Saint-Denis *département*, 1 mixed bovine-ovine farm and 4 ovine farms;
- in the Val d'Oise *département*, 1 mixed bovine-ovine farm and 2 pig farms.

The livestock in the firebreak zone had follow-up visits for clinical examination on the animals present on the premises and the results turned out to be favourable (212 follow-up visits).

Furthermore, blood samples were taken from all the sheep and goats present in the zone between 20 and 30 April, that is 631 blood samples from 37 farms (among which 2 mixed bovine-ovine where samples were taken only from the sheep) of the surveillance zone. The results of the tests have all been negative.

The surveillance zone was therefore lifted on 6 May 2001.

2 – Measures controlling livestock movements.

2.1 – Measures implemented for the firebreak and surveillance zones

The following measures to restrict livestock movements have been implemented in the firebreak and surveillance zones:

- A ban on movement and transport of livestock belonging to susceptible species;
- A ban on all gatherings of livestock (markets, fairs, shows) irrespective of species;
- A ban on transport of all livestock (irrespective of species);

- A ban on entering or leaving the defined area, applicable to all livestock belonging to susceptible species;
- The identification, isolation and quarantining of all farms holding livestock belonging to susceptible species;
- Disinfection of vehicles and containers used for the transportation of animal carcasses, milk, meat and other material capable of carrying the virus;
- A ban on artificial insemination;
- The setting up of facilities for the disinfection of vehicle wheels and the shoes of workers in establishments at risk (abattoirs, knacker's yards, dairies, animal feed depots, etc.);
- The implementation of a distinct route for the collection of milk from holdings located in the reinforced surveillance zone.

In addition, for the firebreak zone (up to a radius of 3 kilometers from infected farms).

- A ban on transport of all livestock (irrespective of species);
- A ban on putting to graze animals belonging to susceptible species.

2.2 – Other control measures applicable to livestock movements throughout France.

The movement and transport on French territory of livestock belonging to susceptible species (cattle, sheep, goats, swine and other cloven-hoofed animals) and horses were banned by a Ministerial order on 5 March 2001. These restrictions apply to movements within France, exports, imports and the transit of livestock from other countries through French territory.

Given the favourable development in the epidemiological situation in France and in accordance with the overall EU measures concerning livestock movements in all member States with the exception of the United Kingdom, the French measures have been relaxed while allowing to channel and monitor the movement of animals belonging to susceptible species. The equine livestock is no longer covered by these restrictive measures.