

**FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) STATUS**

Communication from the Philippines

The following communication, received on 25 June 2010, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the Philippines.

1. In the last OIE General Assembly in May 2010 in Paris, the Philippines was awarded a new FMD<sup>1</sup> status where the entire country was recognized to be FMD free without vaccination, except for one zone. This zone is, however, eligible to also apply for the same classification of FMD free without vaccination as of August 2010, for consideration by the General Assembly in 2011.

2. **A bit of history:** The FMD virus was detected in the country as early as 1902 but the programme for its control and eradication was launched only in 1995, after the big outbreak that hit Luzon, the island where Manila, the capital city is located, and where at least 43 per cent of the FMD susceptible animals are located and traded. The other two big islands, Visayas and Mindanao, are traditionally free from the disease and there were only occasional incursions coming from Luzon. A Progressive Zoning Approach was designed to get the work done piece by piece.

3. **Cost of eradication:** Given the importance of the project, the Philippine Government through the Department of Agriculture deemed it necessary to invest the substantial resources involved, both in terms of manpower and financial inputs. Emergency preparedness and eradication are in the long run the least-cost policy option for the country.

4. **The lessons learned:** Over time we have recognized that no government programme will succeed without public and stakeholder support. In the FMD campaign, all stakeholders were invited to participate both through voluntary and mandatory invitations. The active participation and sincere commitment of farmers, traders, private practitioners and slaughterhouse operators was critical to the success of the programme.

5. **Sustaining the programme:** To further sustain the programme and ensure continued FMD-free status, the national government through the Bureau of Animal Industry is working closely with the regional offices and the local government units, which are the frontline implementers of the quarantine measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is probably the most important livestock disease in the world in terms of economic impact. The reasons for this are not only due to the ability of the disease to cause losses of production, but are also related to the cost of Veterinary Services in the presence of the disease and to restrictions on the trade of animals both locally and internationally.

6. In the commercial sector, the accreditation of farms as FMD free, is tied to the requirement for issuance of shipping documents by the Bureau of Animal Industry. This accreditation process is part of the bigger movement control structure being set-up by the task force to continuously and effectively monitor the health status of animals from the source to the market.

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