

**INFORMATION ON OFFICIAL OIE RECOGNITION OF
FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE FREE STATUS**

Communication from Argentina

The following communication, received on 27 October 2011, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 4 February 2011, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognized a new foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) free zone with vaccination, signifying recognition of the entire national territory as FMD-free. The overall situation of the country is summarized below.

2. The OIE recognizes three FMD-free zones in Argentina, covering the whole of Argentine territory (see map). This year the OIE recognized the high-surveillance zone on the border with Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil as an "FMD-free border zone with vaccination", in addition to the two previously recognized zones, which are:

- The FMD-free zone with vaccination (Centro Norte); recognized in 2002, suspended on two occasions and finally regaining recognition in 2007. Its status has remained unchanged since then; and
- the FMD-free zone without vaccination (Argentine Patagonia); recognized since 2002, the zone has never lost its disease-free status and was expanded in 2007 to encompass a larger geographic area.

3. The newly recognized border zone with vaccination (Cordón Fronterizo) was established when there was an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the Southern Cone countries.

4. It was set up in 2004 in response to a perceived regional risk of foot-and-mouth disease. Exceptional measures were applied that were stricter than those in place for the rest of the zone with vaccination as a form of prevention and control.

5. In 2006, clinical manifestations of foot-and-mouth disease reappeared in a case in Argentina, and measures were implemented in line with international standards. Once the required period of time had elapsed, in May 2007, the OIE General Assembly approved Argentina's request to regain FMD-free status with vaccination for the zone of Centro Norte, except for an area of land classified as being under high surveillance (15 km in width along the border with Paraguay and along part of the border with Bolivia).

6. Subsequently, within the framework of the Standing Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone, Argentina together with the neighbouring countries of Paraguay and Bolivia decided to implement differential strategies which remain in force to this day. The same measures began to be applied in similar high-surveillance zones on the borders between Paraguay and Brazil, Bolivia and Brazil, and Bolivia and Paraguay.

7. The reason why this zone differs from the contiguous zone with vaccination (Centro Norte) is that the agreement to maintain differential measures remains in force within the framework of the border programme of the MERCOSUR Action Plan for FMD-Free Status. This Plan, whose management has been entrusted to MERCOSUR, guarantees the operational effectiveness of the measures as well as regional coordination, a condition stipulated by the OIE when defining the high-surveillance zone. The zone was later recognized as an FMD-free zone with vaccination in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil.

II. ADDITIONAL MEASURES

8. The additional measures adopted for the territory of the recognized zone are the following:

- Strengthening and maintaining the structure of veterinary care in the zones, with a strengthening, *inter alia*, of the local offices, professional human resources, both technical and administrative, means of communication, and dissemination programmes;
- an updated land registry of all establishments housing animals susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease, and georeferencing of land;
- individual identification of all domestic species susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease;
- harmonizing periods, duration and procedures of vaccination in zones bordering other countries;
- systematic vaccination twice a year of all bovines/bubalines with an official vaccine;
- until the second vaccination campaign of 2009, animals of other species susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease were also vaccinated, i.e. pigs, sheep and goats. A subsequent evaluation of the vaccination of these species and its importance as part of the control strategies led to the suspension of this measure;
- additional requirements for authorizing movements of animals susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease;
- stepping-up control of animal movements at fixed and mobile control posts;
- harmonizing scientifically validated seroepidemiological-monitoring methods with the support of the Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Centre (PANAFTOSA), the scientific centre of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO);
- seroepidemiological surveillance with clinical inspections and documentary checking during vaccination activities, where there is a concentration of animals and entry and exit inspections;

- periodical bilateral actions and contact between the staff of the veterinary services in border zones (meetings, inspection visits of local offices and farm holdings, exchange of sanitary information); and
- ongoing training of all health staff involved in, *inter alia*, the prevention and early detection of FMD and handling of foci of the disease.

Illustration

Map of zones recognized by the OIE as free from foot-and-mouth disease

