

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

Communication by Argentina

The following communication, received on 10 July 2012, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

1. By implementing the strategic actions defined in the 2001 National Eradication Plan of the National Agrifood Health and Quality Service (SENASA), the Argentine Republic has obtained OIE recognition of FMD-free status in the following three zones, which together cover the entire national territory (see illustration 1):

- Patagonia, FMD-free zone without vaccination: approved by the OIE in 2002 and expanded in 2007 to include the area from the 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel to Río Negro). This status has been maintained, and is ratified each year by the OIE with the annual updating of the epidemiological surveillance results.
- Centro Norte, FMD-free zone with vaccination: from Río Negro northwards, recognition obtained in 2003 and, after twice being suspended, restored in 2007. Its status has remained unchanged since then, and is ratified each year by the OIE with the annual updating of the epidemiological surveillance results.
- Cordón Fronterizo, FMD-free zone with vaccination: had always belonged to the Centro Norte zone, but when that zone recovered its free status in 2007, an agreement was concluded between the OIE and the neighbouring countries separating the Cordón Fronterizo so that special measures for the border areas could be applied with the support of the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP-MERSOSUR). It occupies a strip along the border about 25 km wide which, for operational reasons, is divided into Frontera Norte A (Salta, Formosa) and Frontera Norte B (Chaco, Corrientes and Misiones). Its status was restored as a zone separate from the Centro Norte zone on 4 February 2011.

2. Today, the National FMD Eradication Plan implemented in 2001, through which it has been possible to achieve and maintain the current status, includes the following strategies:

- Regionalization for the application of differentiated strategies;
- systematic and mandatory vaccination of bovine animals;
- control of animal movements;

- effective system of bovine identification;
- high quality vaccination;
- control and maintenance of the vaccine cold chain;
- epidemiological surveillance: response to reports, serological sampling;
- active participation of producers in the implementation of the policies outlined at the national level by SENASA.

Illustration 1: Current Sanitary Status in the Argentine Republic



### **Bilateral and multilateral actions**

3. Relations between neighbouring official health services along the borders have been strengthened with the help of joint activities in the framework of MERCOSUR's FMD Action Programme (PAMA), which began in 2007. Border meetings were conducted in the course of 2011 between the official health services of the neighbouring countries, in particular with the local border offices of Paraguay and Bolivia.

4. At the same time, further technical assistance activities are being conducted in Bolivia and Paraguay in the framework of the CVP and PAMA with a focus on improving the FMD vaccination

system and optimizing vaccination coverage, and on twinning arrangements with laboratories in Paraguay in accordance with OIE standards.

5. Argentina's sanitary status is ratified every year by the OIE, using annual epidemiological surveillance samples to show the absence of any viral activity and to determine the immunity levels of cattle subject to the vaccination plan. These studies revealed that the protection levels were satisfactory and consistent with good vaccination coverage, sufficient to prevent the circulation and transmission of the FMD virus in the zone with vaccination. Active surveillance also pointed to the absence of any infection in the zone without vaccination, supporting its sanitary status as "FMD-free zone where vaccination is not practised". This surveillance forms part of the strategies of the National FMD Eradication Plan introduced in 2001.

6. The procedures that have been introduced to implement the National Eradication Plan strategies are in line with OIE guidelines and recommendations. In other words, recognition by the OIE of the different zones has been granted because the plan is consistent with the OIE's Terrestrial Code and Terrestrial Manual and complies with international requirements for recognition of free zones, validated annually by the OIE.

7. For all of the above reasons, Argentina's sanitary status entitles it to market fresh meat and meat products as well as live animals and other FMD susceptible animal by-products, since it complies with the sanitary requirements set forth in Chapter 8.5 of the Terrestrial Code for free zones where vaccination either is or is not practised. In the specific case of bovine meat, the OIE's recommendations are set forth in article 8.5.23 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

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