

**DECLARATION THAT COSTA RICA IS A COUNTRY FREE OF  
NEWCASTLE DISEASE, VELOGENIC, VISCEROTROPIC FORM**

The following communication, dated 9 April 1999, has been received from Costa Rica.

To date, not a single case of Newcastle disease, velogenic viscerotropic form (NVV) has been recorded in Costa Rica. Consequently and with a view to securing greater and better access to markets for poultry meat and its derivatives and complying with the sanitary requirements of the countries importing such products, the Government of Costa Rica carried out an investigation which enabled the authorities to declare in April 1996 that the country was free of NVV disease.

The activities of the sanitary and phytosanitary authorities included the establishment of a Bipartite Commission, by Executive Decree No. 22524-MAG of 2 December 1993, made up of officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, representatives of the private sector appointed by the National Poultry Farming Chamber and the representative in Costa Rica of the APHIS-USDA<sup>1</sup>, because the United States is one of the main prospective markets.

The risk analysis which led to the declaration that the country was free of NVV disease consisted in:

- (i) Collection of literature;
- (ii) preparation of a handbook on the prevention, control and eradication of NVV disease with respect to poultry products and subproducts entering Costa Rica;
- (iii) assessment of the results of a mock NVV outbreak in respect of official veterinary surgeons and the veterinary surgeons of the industry;
- (iv) replies to a questionnaire sent out to small, medium and large producers; and
- (v) "risk-based approach" sampling in accordance with APHIS-USDA recommendations.

The diagnostic methods used were:

- Serology: haemoagglutination (HA) inhibition technique;
- virus isolation; and

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<sup>1</sup>APHIS-USDA: Acronym of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

- final confirmatory tests: the samples that still had a suspicious diagnosis were sent to the United States, to the reference laboratory (NVSL-APHIS-USDA) at Ames, Iowa, for confirmation.

The results showed that, as regards the backyard poultry sampled, 2080 cases had grades of 0 to 1:32 and 220 came into the suspect category with grades of 1:64. The latter samples were subjected to the virus isolation and HA tests. The results obtained after the isolation in SPF eggs and the later haemoagglutination test on industrial breeding fowl were negative.

On the basis of the results obtained from the three-year formal investigation process, it was concluded in April 1996 that Costa Rica was free of NVV disease.

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