

**EVOLUTION OF THE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE
ERADICATION PLAN IN ARGENTINA**

Communication from Argentina

A. HEALTH STATUS IN 2001

1. Since the reintroduction of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Argentina, a new health policy management system has been introduced which is essentially guided by the principles of transparency and professionalism laid down in the National Foot-and-Mouth Disease Eradication Plan of 5 April 2001. A series of measures were adopted in this connection, including, in particular, the regionalization of the country, the control of the movement of animals, animal by-products and like products, the Information System for the Notification and Suspected Cases of Vesicular Diseases and mandatory requirements for the transport of animals.

2. Under this policy of transparency, every notification or suspected case of vesicular disease was registered and communicated both to the international and national reference institutions.

B. NATIONAL VACCINATION CAMPAIGN 2001

3. As a priority measure for the control of foot-and-mouth disease, a massive campaign was launched to vaccinate with an oil-based vaccine the totality of the bovine population throughout the country, except in the region comprising the provinces of Neuquén, Chubut, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and the Islands of the South Atlantic, and the region to the south of the Negro River in the province of Río Negro (see Map I).

4. The strict application of this plan, under which 122 million doses of vaccine were distributed in the two campaigns conducted in 2001, led to the eradication of the epidemic in September. In the following months, very few outbreaks were recorded; as of 12 June 2002, 141 days have passed without an outbreak and 9 months have passed without an epidemic.

5. In accordance with Resolution 34/02, the first vaccination period of 2002 began on 15 February. As of the date of this report (18 May 2002), 56.9 million doses have been distributed – covering over 100 per cent of the total number of animals to be vaccinated – of which 91 per cent have been administered.

C. SEROEPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

6. A serological survey is being conducted at national level with a view to detecting viral activity and quantifying the level of immunity provided by the vaccine. This survey will be conducted on 88,000 animals and 4,000 farms throughout the country.

7. For the purposes of this survey, the country was divided into three zones. In Zone A, comprising the Central and Mesopotamia regions, 39,200 samples were collected from 2,800 establishments; in Zone B, comprising NOA-Cuyo and Patagónica Norte A, 19,680 samples

were collected from 984 establishments; and in Zone C, Patagónica Norte B and Patagónica Sur, 29,792, samples were collected from 760 establishments.

D. HEALTH STATUS IN 2002

8. The outbreaks that occurred at the end of 2001 were addressed by a special eradication program providing for sanitary slaughter and other measures to preserve conditions in unaffected areas, in accordance with the chapter on foot-and-mouth disease of the International Animal Health Code of the International Office of Epizootics (OIE).

9. The only outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease this year occurred in the department of Río Cuarto in the province of Córdoba, and was confirmed during epidemiological week No. 4 (20-26 January). Following confirmation by the Central Laboratory (Type A virus), all susceptible animals from the establishment in question were slaughtered. No neighbouring establishments were affected, nor were there any secondary outbreaks.

10. During epidemiological week No. 22 (26 May-1 June 2002), a suspected case of foot-and-mouth disease was reported at an establishment in the province of Buenos Aires but tested negative for the disease. Until the suspected case was cleared, the establishment was placed under quarantine, ring vaccination and epidemiological tracing was conducted, any movement of livestock in the surveillance area was prohibited and the international reference authorities were kept permanently informed.

11. The samples sent for analysis to the SENASA Central Laboratory in Martínez tested negative in ELISA and Elisa 3ABC/EITB tests, tests on suckling mice and transfers through BHK cells (3 transfers).

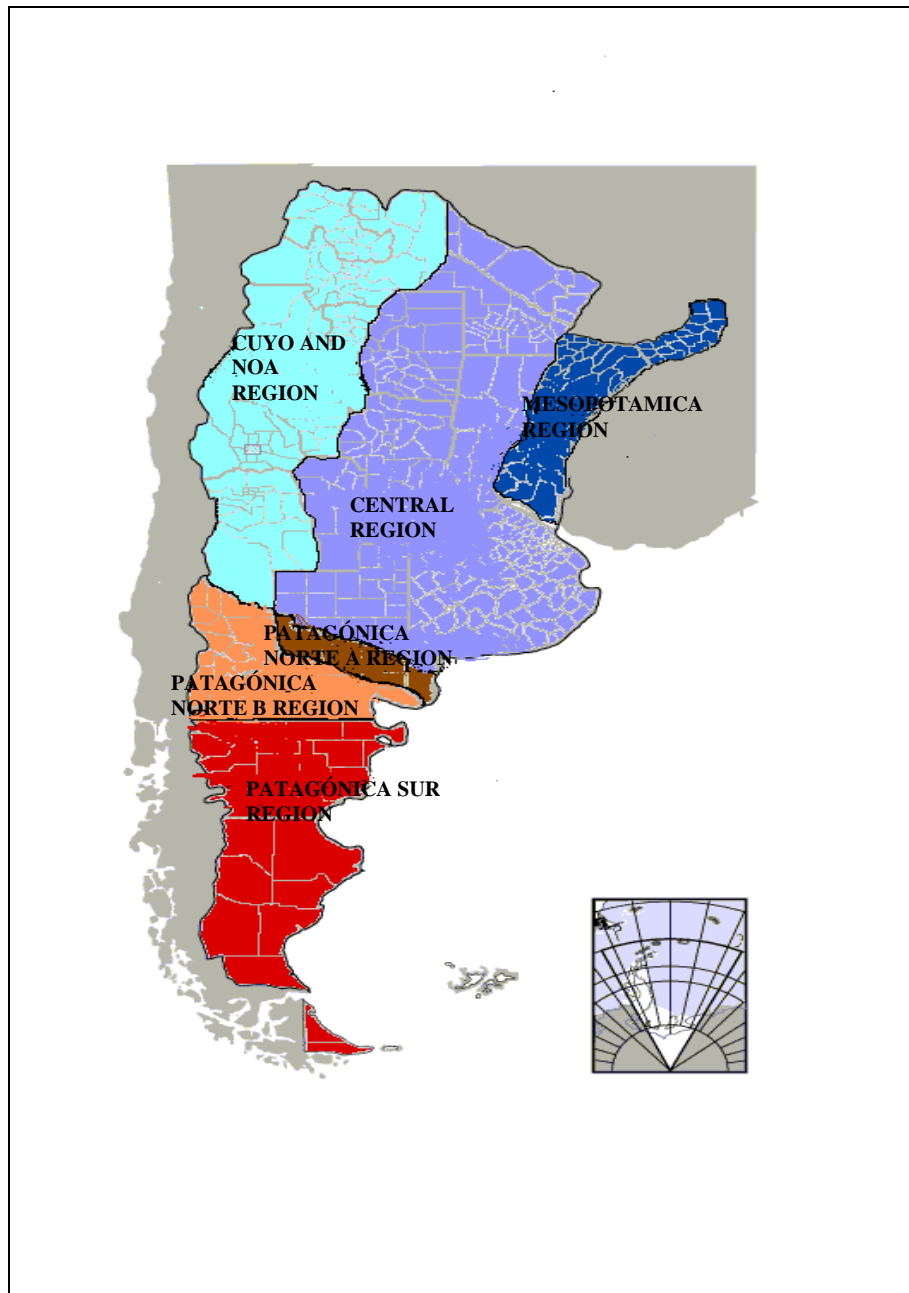
E. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND MEETINGS

12. In 2001, a visit was made by technicians from Cuenca del Plata (CPFA-OPS) and two visits were conducted by inspectors from the European Union. Thanks to the result of the last audit, Argentina's fresh deboned and matured bovine meat market could be reopened, reflecting the sanitary status achieved through the implementation of the National Foot-and-Mouth Disease Eradication Plan (2002/45/EC).

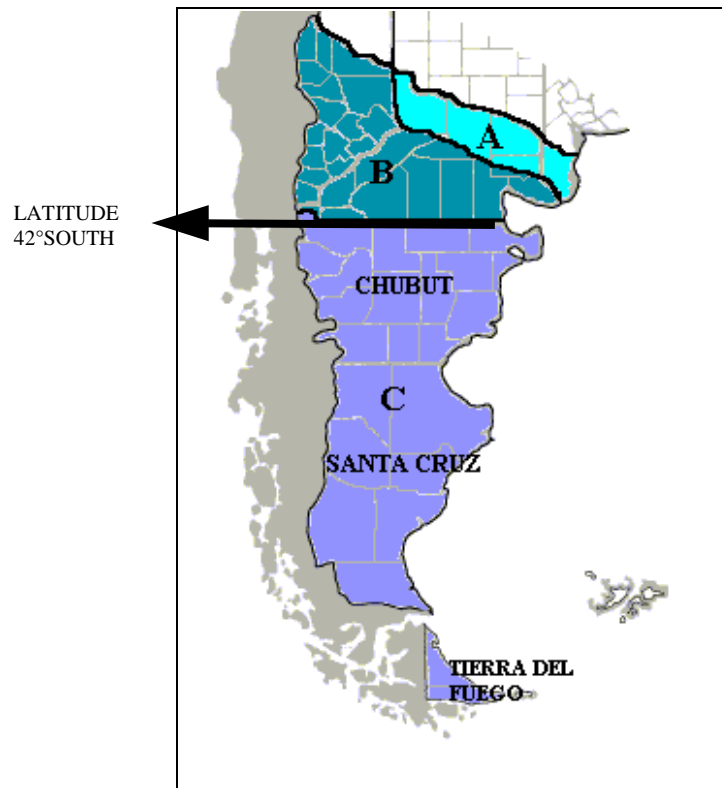
13. In the same year, work began in the Patagónica Sur and the Patagónica Norte B regions with a series of health strategies leading to the preparation of a document that was submitted to the OIE with a view to restoring the region's status as a foot-and-mouth disease-free zone where vaccination is not practised. The document was presented to the OIE Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission, and was successful. At the meeting of the OIE International Committee held on 28 May 2002, the General Committee adopted Resolution No. XVII declaring the region of Argentina situated to the south of Latitude 42° South as "*Foot-and-mouth disease-free where vaccination is not practised*" (see Map II).

14. In accordance with the current epidemiological situation, the Patagónica Norte region, which acts as a protection zone, was divided into a buffer area with vaccination (Patagónica Norte A region) and a surveillance area without vaccination (Patagónica Norte B region).

MAP I



MAP II



PATAGÓNICA REGION
C – FMD-free zone where vaccination is not practised
PROTECTION AREAS:
B – Surveillance – without vaccination
C – Buffer – with vaccination