

**FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE**

Statement by Paraguay in the Meeting of 24-25 June 2003

1. In the meeting of this Committee held on 7 and 8 November last year, Paraguay reported the detection, on 31 October 2002, of the foot-and-mouth virus in two bovine animals out of a total of 719 animals on a cattle ranch in the Department of Canindeyú, on the frontier with Brazil. In order to deal with this situation the National Animal Health Service (SENACSA), which is responsible for the control and eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in our country, immediately activated the National Sanitary Emergency System and *inter alia* took the decision to slaughter all the animals involved at the ranch in question. Further details may be found in document G/SPS/GEN/360.
2. The above situation led to the almost immediate closure of the main export markets for meat and meat products, which caused huge economic losses to the country.
3. For Paraguay, a developing, landlocked country, which is making considerable efforts to integrate itself into the international trading system, exports of meat and meat products represent a significant percentage of all its foreign trade, and it therefore attaches the greatest importance to the total eradication of the disease. Accordingly, the official veterinary service has put in place a new sanitary policy regime and introduced a number of measures, including the following:
  - (a) The adoption of a new vaccination strategy for 2003, involving two periods of vaccination and providing for animal vaccinations to be carried out under a system of animal health commissions made up of representatives of the public and private sectors concerned. In the first stage, the vaccination programme covers three departments, some of which have borders with neighbouring countries. For the rest of the country, vaccination is carried out under the supervision of inspectors certified by the official veterinary service;
  - (b) countrywide seroepidemiological sampling in cattle, swine and sheep (approximately 35,000 animals), and in wild animals susceptible to the disease;
  - (c) the signing of technical cooperation agreements with the official veterinary services of Brazil and Argentina for joint operations, mainly in border areas;
  - (d) the organization of seminars/workshops involving producers, the processing industry, related professionals and representatives of the public sector concerned.
4. It should be noted that since 31 October 2002, the date on which the above-mentioned case was detected, no other instance of foot-and-mouth disease has been recorded anywhere in the territory of the Republic of Paraguay; this has led to the recovery of some export markets.

5. We believe that, given the strict measures adopted and applied throughout the country and the current stable epidemiological situation, Paraguay will soon be able to regain its status as a "country free from foot-and-mouth disease with vaccination".

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