

**DIFFICULTIES WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GRAIN, FRUIT,
VEGETABLES AND TUBERS BECAUSE OF RESTRICTIONS
DUE TO FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE**

Communication from Argentina

The following communication, received on 24 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

Background

1. In May 2002, the region of Argentina situated south of the 42° parallel was recognized by the OIE as being free from foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) without vaccination. In July 2003, the OIE recognized the rest of the country as being free from FMD with vaccination. As part of the process of recognition by the relevant technical body, Argentina's trading partners began recognizing the above statuses and recommencing trade that had been suspended.
2. In August 2003, a breakout of FMD was detected on Argentina's northern border, in the province of Salta, and was reported internationally. The mitigation procedures recommended by the OIE were applied. In January 2005, the Scientific Commission re-attributed to Argentina FMD-free status with vaccination north of the 42° parallel.
3. On 8 February 2006, a breakout of FMD was detected in an establishment in the department of San Luis del Palmar (province of Corrientes). The procedures prescribed by the Health Code were immediately put into effect, and detection of the breakout was notified to the OIE and to all of Argentina's trading partners. This elicited different reactions.
4. It is Argentina's understanding that, as established by the OIE's Terrestrial Animal Health Code – 2005 in its Chapter on Foot-and-Mouth Disease (2.2.10), only straw and forage are subject to regulation for the purposes of trade (Article 2.2.10.28). This provision is exhaustive as regards the conditions governing the movement of such commodities from FMD-infected zones or countries. No other agricultural product is regulated by this provision in respect of domestic trade, international trade or the movement of goods.
5. The OIE document entitled "*International standards concerning the risks of foot and mouth disease associated with trade in animals and animal products*" has also been examined. After listing the products in the Code which should be subject to regulation, it clearly states the following:

"The Code considers other commodities, including cereal grains, fruit, vegetables and tubers, as not likely to present such a risk".

Problems noted

6. Although most of our trading partners have included only regulations based on the OIE standards and recommendations, some Members have laid down provisions regulating grain, fruit, vegetables, tubers and other such commodities, even going so far as to provide regulations for thermoprocessed products packaged for retail sale, such as maté and tea.

7. Argentina is extremely concerned about regulations of this kind, which are clearly disproportionate to the risk involved and are not based on any scientific evidence. It therefore alerts this Committee to lack of observance of the international standard in question and to the problems noted in international trade in agricultural products. Argentina also wishes to point out that it has initiated the appropriate bilateral meetings with the few trading partners that have established such regulations and will keep the Committee informed of developments.
