

as well as the ongoing efforts to maintain high vaccination coverage levels and to control other communicable diseases, attest to the impact of well-coordinated approaches that require national commitment

and allocation of the necessary resources to carry out activities at regional and country levels. Continued national and international commitment will be critical if these challenges are to be met successfully.



## Progress Toward Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

### BACKGROUND

The prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) directly and significantly affects a country's production of protein of animal origin, such as milk and meat, which is essential for human nutrition. This disease is also the greatest nontariff obstacle to international trade in animals and animal products worldwide.

The Region of the Americas has made enormous headway in controlling foot-and-mouth disease during the last decade under the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease. The Hemispheric Plan was prepared at the request of the V Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health (Washington, D.C., 1987), which also approved the creation of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and entrusted it with monitoring and supporting the achievement of the Hemispheric Plan's objectives and goals. The Committee comprises one minister of agriculture and one representative

of livestock producers from each subregion of the Americas. The Committee has held five meetings since its creation and has provided essential political and technical support to the program to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease. The Pan American Health Organization, through its Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA) in Brazil, is mandated to provide technical cooperation to the countries for implementation of the Hemispheric Plan.

Successful fulfillment of the plan requires integrated and coordinated efforts of the public and private sectors through local producers, as well as the effective use of technical components such as information and epidemiologic surveillance systems, ecosystem-specific control activities, potent and effective vaccines, and methods of risk analysis. Participation of the community has also proven to be an important strategy.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ACTIVITIES

The following goals had been achieved by the end of 1995:

- Uruguay was recognized as a FMD-free country without vaccination in 1995 (its status had been FMD-free with vacci-

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Source: Background information on foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas. International Conference on Perspectives for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in the Next Millennium and its Impact on Food Security and Trade: Focus on the Americas. Brasília, 11–12 July 1996.

nation since 1993), as five years had elapsed without a case of the disease.

- No cases of FMD had been seen in the entire country of Argentina for two years, and in the Mesopotamia region for three years.
- In Brazil, two years had elapsed without a case of FMD in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.
- Paraguay had not recorded a case of FMD for over a year, and to date has had no cases for more than two years.

All these countries and areas are part of the International Technical Cooperation Agreement for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in the River Plate Basin, signed in 1987 and coordinated by PAHO/PANAFTOSA.

In summary, at the end of 1995, 100 million head of cattle in countries of the Southern Cone subregion had been free of foot-and-mouth disease for periods ranging from one to five years. In addition, the countries of North America, Central America, and the Caribbean have remained disease-free, as have the South American areas of French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and the Uraba region of Colombia, which borders the FMD-free zone of Panama. In the Andean area and the Amazon subregion, the endemic situation remains stationary. However, progress in control of the disease has been observed in the Southeast and Central-West regions of Brazil.

In May 1994 the heads of PAHO/WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) met in Paris to discuss their member countries' requests for cooperation in the control and

eradication of foot-and-mouth disease. They concluded that in order to exchange information on experiences in the various regions of the world, a series of international conferences would be held under the auspices of these organizations. In view of the progress that has been made in South America, it was decided that the first conference would focus on the Americas and be held in Brasília, Brazil, in 1996.

The "International Conference on Perspectives for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in the Next Millennium and Its Impact on Food Security and Trade: Focus on the Americas" took place on 11–12 July, with the additional sponsorship of the Government of Brazil. It had the following objectives:

- To encourage governments to strengthen the global commitment to eradicate foot-and-mouth-disease;
- To facilitate the trade in animals and animal products on the international market resulting from the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease.
- To maintain the balance between food security and trade, which is necessary for human development in the Americas and other regions of the world.
- To analyze the progress made in the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in South America and to share experiences with other regions of the world.
- To establish appropriate mechanisms for promoting and strengthening sub-regional plans under the Hemispheric Plan.

Other conferences will be organized at a later date in Africa and Asia.

