



**Pan-American Health Organization
World Health Organization**

**VIII MEETING OF THE HEMISPHERIC COMMITTEE FOR
FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION**

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FINAL REPORT

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FINAL REPORT

The VIII Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COHEFA VIII) was held at the Renaissance Hotel, city of São Paulo, Brazil, on May 1, 2001, as convened by the Director of the Pan American Health Organization-PAHO.

Officers

The officers of the Meeting were the following:

President:	Dr. Marcus Vinicius Pratini de Moraes	Brazil
Vice-President:	Eng. Pedro Gordón	Panamá
Rapporteur:	Eng. Pedro Morel	Paraguay

Dr. George A.O. Alleyne, Director of PAHO, acted as Secretary *ex officio* of the Meeting, and Dr. Eduardo Correa Melo, Director of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA), acted as Technical Secretary.

Participants

The following participants represented their respective subregions:

- For the Amazon Subregion: Mr. Marcus Vinicius Pratini de Moraes (Brazil) and Mr. Antenor de Amorin Nogueira (Brazil).
- For the Andean Subregion: Dr. Elsa Carbonell (Perú) and Mr. Jorge Visbal (Colombia).
- For the Caribbean Subregion: Dr. Trevor King (Barbados)
- For the Southern Cone Subregion: Mr. Pedro Morel (Paraguay)
- For the Meso American Subregion: Mr. Pedro Gordón (Panamá) and Mr. Nery Ortíz (Guatemala).
- For the North American Subregion: Dr. Craig Reed (United States of America)

Observers from two member countries (Perú and the United States of America), two governmental organizations as well as from various non-governmental organizations and academic institutions were also present.

Agenda

Opening of the Meeting

Election of President, Vice-President and Rapporteur

Address of Sir George Alleyne, Director of the Pan American Health Organization

Adoption of the order of the day

Report of the Secretariat of the Committee

Progress Reports of the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

- Southern Cone
- Andean Zone
- Amazon Zone
- Foot-and-Mouth Disease-free zones

Report on the XXVII and XXVIII Regular Meetings of the South American Commission for the Fight against Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COSALFA).

Report on the Third Extraordinary Meeting of COSALFA.

Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease for 2001-2009

Conclusions and recommendations

Closing of the Meeting

Sessions

Two plenary sessions and one closing session were held.

Opening of the Meeting

Dr. Alleyne greeted the participants and stressed that large steps have been taken towards foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) eradication in the region, as a result of joint and coordinated activities of various sectors and livestock entities. However, the disease has recently spread to Latin American areas which were previously unaffected, causing serious social and economic repercussions but not to the same extent as those suffered by European countries with recorded FMD outbreaks. Fortunately, the Region relied on other mechanisms to handle the situation. Dr. Alleyne highlighted that the Americas have been the best organized region of the world to combat FMD. He also stressed that the eradication campaign recession has caused great concern and no efforts must be spared to maintain progress achieved. He stated that PANAFTOSA has been at the disposal of the countries to give assistance in its capacity as reference center for technical cooperation to control foot-and-mouth disease and other zoonoses.

Dr. Alleyne referred to the high cost of eradication programs and suggested that once the countries reach FMD-free status they must consider the possibility to reserve part of their budgetary resources for prevention and surveillance activities to continue disease-free. Finally, he stressed that in view of progress achieved in the past there was no doubt that, at short term, the countries would eliminate present difficulties.

Order of the Day

The Order of the Day prepared by the Secretariat was approved with no modifications.

Report of the Secretariat of the Committee

The Technical Secretary reported on activities performed in accordance with Resolutions of COHEFA VII, which refer to two fundamental topics: progress made by the Hemispheric Plan of Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and the new mandate awarded PANAFTOSA for technical cooperation on zoonosis. The Secretary mentioned that during the time covered by the report, positive and negative facts were recorded. Thus, by the end of the period 1999-2000, an area of 5.800.000 kilometers totalling 145 million bovines, was kept FMD-free with and without vaccination. However, at the same time reintroduction of the disease was notified in FMD-free countries and zones in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay. This pointed out the need to reinstall some components of the Hemispheric Plan, strengthening regional scope as a strategic and epidemiologic space focusing on prevention and joint coordinated action among the countries.

He further noted that technical-administrative organizations must be strengthened at country and subregional levels, with determined participation of the livestock sector through co-management models such as have been prepared in some of the countries. The Technical Secretary then described a list of technical cooperation activities developed by PANAFTOSA in the countries with respect to foot-and-mouth disease as well as zoonoses. He described execution of activities of the new mandate received by PANAFTOSA from member countries, regarding its regional role as auditing organism for FMD national programs and watching over execution of the required action to control problems. He stressed zoonoses control strategies using centers of excellence in the region for the different diseases covered by technical cooperation. He also emphasized improvement in the Continental System for Information and Surveillance of Vesicular Diseases, which was more sensitive and specific and could be applied to various syndromes and zoonoses, as well as its economic and sanitary repercussions in the countries.

The Committee approved the report with no comments.

Progress Report on the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Dr. Alejandro López (PANAFTOSA) reported on the Southern Cone and the Andean Zone. The situation in the Southern Cone continued without problems up to the middle of 2000 when there was evidence of viral activity. Positive serology was detected in Argentina and afterwards also in Paraguay, as well as some outbreaks in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and Uruguay. The present epidemic started at the beginning of 2001 and spread to Argentina and Uruguay.

Dr. Victor Saraiva (PANAFTOSA) analyzed the situation of vesicular diseases in the Subregional Amazon Project and non-Amazon Brazil zones as well as in Central America's free area, according to data from the Continental System of Information and Surveillance of Vesicular Diseases. While stressing the downward trend of foot-and-mouth disease occurrence in the Amazon area, the increase of vesicular stomatitis was also noted. Nonetheless, investments of private and public resources tended to decline, which might endanger progress achieved. Dr. Saraiva emphasized the need for larger investments on prevention activities.

In Central America, foot-and-mouth-disease surveillance indicated a stationary trend as regards vesicular stomatitis. Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panamá reported the highest number of disease outbreaks. The level of samples collection and their laboratory results improved during 1999-2000, although reference data from the laboratory in the City

of Panamá (LADIVES) showed there is still a high percentage of negative cases and also without diagnosis.

Mr. Marcus Vinicius Pratini de Moraes (Brazil) presented a summary of the Plan for Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Brazil. He described the evolution of the disease up to the present epidemiological situation, underscoring that most of the country continued FMD-free with and without vaccination. The livestock sector as well as the government were committed to reaching the goal of eradication, cooperation with PANAFTOSA, strengthening the area covered by laboratory activities and increasing budgetary resources to combat FMD, which had gone up to US\$923 million in 2000.

The Committee emphasized the need to benefit from the present situation so as not to incur the same mistakes in the future and also stressed the importance of transparency, shared information and joint efforts of the countries. Several questions were raised regarding importation of grains and cereals and the possible risk of FMD transmission. It was pointed out that the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) had determined that cereals and grains were not means for the disease transmission. The Committee underscored that when establishing decisions over international trade, the countries should follow regulations of OIE's International Zoosanitary Code. The participants requested that the topic of grains and cereals be specifically dealt with in the Committee's Resolution.

Report on the XXVII and XXVIII Regular Meetings of the South American Commission for the Fight against Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COSALFA)

Dr. Fabián Martínez Almúdevar, in his capacity as President of the XXVII COSALFA and as Argentina's representative, summarized the results of the meeting, pointing out decisions of Argentina and Paraguay to suspend vaccination to prepare for recognition as disease-free. Brazil had presented documentation from the Central-West Circuit, which requested recognition as disease-free with vaccination. Colombia and Guyana had also started process for recognition as free zone and country, respectively.

Dr. Luis Acuña, (President of XXVIII COSALFA and representing Paraguay) presented the report of the Meeting, which coincided with the emergency sanitary situation in the River Plate Basin subregion caused by outbreaks in Argentina. Topics of the Meeting: The governments of Colombia and Guyana had submitted proposals to the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) which were accepted by the Commission for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other Epizootics. Delegates approved resolution confirming new mandate offered to PANAFTOSA by the Third Extraordinary Meeting of COSALFA. Time limits were determined to prepare the new plan of action and the establishment of a

special multinational group to attend foot-and-mouth disease emergency situations. A proposal was approved to modify and improve the hemispheric information and surveillance system so as to include other diseases. Finally, delegates approved a resolution pointing out risks in the introduction, storage and handling of foot-and-mouth disease exotic strains in the Region and countries were urged to destroy them.

Report on the Third Extraordinary Meeting of COSALFA

Dr. Eduardo Correa (Director, PANAFTOSA) summarized conclusions of the Third Extraordinary Meeting of COSALFA, which was convened in November 2000 to meet emergency situations in Colombia and the River Plate Basin. To eliminate this problem, delegates had requested more extensive cooperation between the countries and the strengthening of official services at national level. It was also required to reinforce regional coordination and technical cooperation organizations, including COSALFA and COHEFA and the Inter American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Health and Agriculture (RIMSAs), as well as PANAFTOSA in its capacity as regional reference for zoonoses. It was also decided that the foot-and-mouth disease eradication plan of action should follow new guidelines, with greater emphasis on prevention and on the new auditing role of PANAFTOSA in the countries. Furthermore, the incorporation of Chile as River Plate Basin member was also approved.

Plan of action of the Hemispheric Program for Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA), 2001-2009

Dr. Alejandro López (PANAFTOSA) summarized activities for revision and reformulation of the plan of action. He presented a comparative analysis of foot-and-mouth disease occurrence in South America and underscored the need for a new epidemiologic regionalization to support definition and execution of different activities strategies.

Members of the Committee expressed their support to the proposed modifications of the plan of action, especially the strengthening of epidemiologic surveillance, integrated animal health plans in border areas and maintenance of free zones with vaccination. The importance of collaboration between public and private sectors in prevention activities was stressed. A representative of the private sector then suggested that the public sector should seek allocation of larger resources towards foot-and-mouth disease prevention and encouraged producers associations to continue active participation in co-management of preventive national programs.

It was pointed out that the proposed plan of action is a generic document and a more in-depth analysis of epidemiologic determinants responsible for foot-and-mouth disease reoccurrence in South America is required. It was also suggested that the document should incorporate a technical and economic analysis bearing in mind the specific reality of the countries. Likewise, it was recommended that the plan should include activities to deal with specific needs of disease-free countries and that other international cooperation organisms should participate in the reformulation of the plan.

Tourism was considered a risk factor in the free countries of the Region, thus it is necessary for them to harmonize their prevention and control strategies to prevent virus introduction through tourists. It was informed that countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had agreed to harmonize their strategies of disease prevention to meet risks held by international tourism. PANAFTOSA's support was requested to prepare plans for emergency and mock operations to test emergency attention during disease outbreaks in the free zones. PANAFTOSA was also requested to assist countries in the training of human resources for programs management, emergency situations attention and epidemiologic surveillance. Finally, the Committee reiterated its support to the new mandate of PANAFTOSA, to the strengthening of its national programs auditing role and to recommendations of required activities, especially in emergency situations.

Dr. Alleyne thanked the delegates for their suggestions as well as the active participation of the private sectors representatives, their contribution to debates and support to PANAFTOSA's functions. He underscored the need for financial contributions from the sector to allow the Center's effective collaboration with the countries towards the solution of animal health problems.

Other Matters

There was concern over Resolution 9 adopted by the XXVIII COSALFA regarding maintenance and handling of exotic foot-and-mouth disease strains. The Argentine delegate explained that the creation of an exotic antigen bank emanated from the need to rely on a wide range of biologic instruments to combat any future emergency situations.

Likewise, the plan of action prepared by Argentina for 2001-2005 was distributed among the participants together with updated surveillance information of the country.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Rapporteur presented a resolution project which was adopted by the Committee after various changes were incorporated, especially one relative to grains and cereals importations. The final version of the resolution is attached to this document.

Closing Session

Dr. Alleyne thanked participants for their clear contributions to deliberations of the Committee and expressed his thanks to the government of Brazil and the State of São Paulo for hosting the Meeting. He highlighted that the present foot-and-mouth disease emergency situation had joined the countries in the search for solutions and had shown the effectiveness of international collaboration to solve common problems. He thanked the participants for their support to strengthen PANAFTOSA and reiterated commitment of PAHO to continue working towards the goal of foot-and-mouth disease eradication.

The President thanked again the participants and the government of Brazil and then adjourned the Meeting.

Resolution

COHEFA8.R1

THE VIII MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

Considering:

- The gains made toward the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in previous decades in the Southern Cone region;
- The progress made in the eradication program of Colombia with recognition of a wide area of its territory as disease-free with vaccination;
- The efforts of the government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to establish the required conditions for recognition of the country as disease-free without vaccination;

- The traditional status of the Caribbean subregion as disease-free;
- The negative impact of sanitary emergencies in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay, which highlighted the need to rely on an international group for attention to emergencies;
- The need to integrate programs extending over geographic borders and to consolidate credibility and transparency of the programs of the Region;
- The need to maintain participation of the private sector in national programs co-management and its confidence that achievements reached will be increased and maintained;
- That eradication of a disease determines the need to take rigorous action towards prevention of its reintroduction to the area; and
- That it is necessary to revise the present Plan of Action of PHEFA, emphasizing prevention activities,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the countries which still record occurrences of foot-and-mouth disease to redouble their efforts towards the elimination of clinical cases, thus diminishing viral sources in the region.
2. To recommend that the countries which have reached disease-free status maintain resources assigned to prevention and within a regional outlook, support still-affected border countries to lessen the risk of disease reintroduction to their territories.
3. To propose to the governments of all member countries of PHEFA to support PANAFTOSA in the execution of its new mandate as evaluating entity of national programs, especially during emergency situations, as defined at the III Extraordinary Meeting and at the XXVIII Regular Meeting of COSALFA.
4. To request PANAFTOSA to work with the Caribbean countries to establish contingency plans for animal diseases.

5. To request PANAFTOSA to guide its technical cooperation towards a prevention approach, stimulating active surveillance activities and human resources training at regional level.
6. To urge governments to participate in the development of the information and surveillance system proposed by PANAFTOSA, strengthening its reliability and its participation to guarantee veterinary services quality in the region.
7. To request the countries to support PANAFTOSA in its mandate as Reference Laboratory for studies of viral strains active at the regional level, supplying the required information to establish the disease flow in the region.
8. To reiterate governments about the importance of co-management between the public and private sectors in the execution of long-term animal health programs, as in the case of foot-and-mouth disease eradication.
9. To request PANAFTOSA to continue developing the 2001-2009 plan of action for PHEFA and the proposal to create a group for attention to emergencies at the regional level.
10. To urge governments that once the new plan of action of PHEFA is developed and approved, they must adjust their programs according to its general guidelines, and to reinforce structures for attention to emergencies.
11. To emphasize within the scope of adequate use of risk analysis, the need to prevent enforcement of sanitary barriers to grains and cereals importations as according to OIE, they hold no risk of foot-and-mouth disease diffusion.
12. To endorse resolutions of the XXVII and XXVIII Regular Meetings and the III Extraordinary Meeting of COSALFA.