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## Control of foot-and-mouth diseases

### Report<sup>1</sup>

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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1. 1958 - 10th Session - First part



## A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Considering the losses, amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds, which have been sustained in almost every European country owing to periodical epidemics of foot-and-mouth disease ;

Having regard to the work carried out :

1. by the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease set up by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations ;
2. by the special section of the International Office of Epizootics ;

Having regard, moreover, to the International Sanitary Convention for the prevention of foot-and-mouth disease drawn up by the International Office of Epizootics, which has been open for signature by Governments since 1954 ;

Noting that the opportunities thereby offered to member countries of the Council of Europe of promoting the co-ordination and control of measures to prevent and cure foot-and-mouth disease have not been exploited by some of them to the extent desirable ;

Recalling the steps taken by the Committee of Ministers in its Resolution (54) 19, particularly the invitation to Member Governments to join the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and give effect to the recommendations of the International Office of Epizootics ([Doc. 357](#), paragraph 12);

Believing that for the successful control of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe:

*it is essential for the countries affected to resort to slaughter, vaccination or a combination of these two methods, in the absence of new methods acknowledged to be more effective and less costly ;*

*steps must be taken to set up a Vaccine Bank ;*

*it is at all events necessary:*

1. *that the same stringent measures should be taken in all countries ;*
2. *that countries less seriously affected should use the expedient of slaughter, as this seems to be advantageous, and that those more seriously affected should combine this method with vaccination ;*
3. *that all countries should take concerted action against the epizootic ;*
4. *that an intense, co-ordinated effort should be made to promote research,*

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers:

1. that it should again urge Member Governments which have not signed or ratified the International Convention for the Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease to follow the example of the other signatories so that the measures provided for in the Convention may soon be put into operation with the co-operation of all member countries ;
2. that it should again invite Member Governments which have not yet joined the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease to become members of that Commission or at least to find ways and means of giving it effective support;
3. that it should try out any new methods of control and encourage research and its co-ordination ;

Invites the Committee of Ministers to inform it as soon as possible of any action it may take on this Recommendation and of the results of such action.

## B. Explanatory Memorandum

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Foot-and-mouth disease—which occurred only sporadically a few years ago—has wrought increasing havoc in Europe.

In years of severe outbreaks, losses in livestock, meat or milk, dislocation of the internal or external trade of the countries affected, the cost of vaccination and its treatment of infected animals have involved some countries in monetary loss amounting to tens of millions of pounds.

### 2. METHODS PRACTISED

While some countries such as Ireland are at present immune, there are still quite a number affected by the disease.

The methods of control at present practised are:

*sanitary measures ;*

*vaccination ;*

*slaughter.*

I. Sanitary measures are applied in every country but with varying degrees of strictness. They are: prohibition of the movement of livestock, closing of markets, strict disinfection of means of transport, pasteurisation of milk, control of imports.

II. Countries subject to the disease resort to vaccination or slaughter or a combination of these methods. This depends, as a general rule, on the degree of infection.

1. Slightly or casually affected countries generally rely on slaughter alone (e.g. Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland).
2. Some countries too radically infected to rely on one method alone also practise regional vaccination (Austria), compulsory vaccination (ring vaccination — Denmark) or systematic vaccination (Netherlands).
3. Some countries rely solely on compulsory vaccination (Luxembourg).
4. Others apply compulsory ring vaccination and otherwise encourage vaccination, without going so far as to make it compulsory (Belgium).

Finally, there are some countries which encourage vaccination only or intend to introduce it in the near future (Greece and Turkey).

### 3. ADVANTAGES AND DRAWBACKS OF THESE METHODS

#### 3.1. Slaughter :

1. Advantages :

*a lower overall cost,*

*wider scope for export and trade in general ;*

2. Drawbacks:

1. psychological: the necessity of slaughtering all infected animals on a particular farm,
2. economic:
  - a. generally speaking, compensation does not cover losses in livestock, and output and the cost of disinfecting premises, etc.
  - b. the loss of pedigree breeding stock has serious results.

### **3.2. Compulsory vaccination:**

1. Advantages:

*reduced loss of livestock for the individual farmer and for the country,  
possibility of saving pedigree breeding stock.*

2. Drawbacks:

*financial: total costs appear to be much higher,  
the disease develops new characteristics and the vaccine must be adapted accordingly,  
large quantities of the vaccine must always be available even though it may not be used, since its  
effects are short-lived.*

Provision is needed on a European scale for permanent stocks of vaccine which could easily be made available immediately an outbreak of the disease occurred in any country. Actually, vaccinated livestock appear to be more liable to the disease during the first few days after vaccination, which argues greater risk of infection where the method of ring vaccination is employed.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

I. So far as our present knowledge goes, it would seem:

1. that countries only slightly affected would well be advised to use the expedient of slaughter ;
2. that countries seriously affected, on the other hand, would do well to combine the two methods of compulsory vaccination and slaughter; here the Netherlands provides an interesting test case.

II. It is at all events essential:

- a. that every country should take drastic and, as far as possible, the same sanitary measures;
- b. that they should move in the direction of a joint campaign, as this would be both more effective and more equitable (countries fighting the disease are liable to be infected by their more passive neighbours).

Certain international organizations have realised this and are working along these lines.

In addition to the experiments encouraged by O . E . E . C ,

*F. A. O . has set up a Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease;  
the I. O . E. has a special section to deal with foot-and-mouth disease.*

In order to establish close co-operation on a world scale, and to co-ordinate existing attempts to combat the disease, the French Government has submitted a draft sanitary convention covering inter alia:

1. les mesures générales de prophylaxie ;
2. general measures of prophylaxis,
3. the publication of information,
4. international trade in livestock.

To conclude, it is essential:

*that strict sanitary measures be made compulsory,  
that research, now conducted on an inadequate scale, be co-ordinated and a new impulse given to  
scientific work in this field<sup>2</sup>*

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2. There should be experiments to test the apparent effectiveness of Anavirus as a curative method.