



May 1, 2001

UDAF AND USDA HOLD WORKSHOP TO STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO KEEP FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE OUT OF THE UNITED STATES

Calling on the resources of multiple state and federal agencies, the Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson is announcing comprehensive efforts to expand and strengthen programs aimed at keeping Foot and Mouth Disease out of Utah. While traditional procedures aimed at keeping this and other livestock diseases out of the state have been in place for many years, the department is “tightening the preventative filter” in the wake of recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in foreign countries.

As of April 27, 2001 there were 1,916 reported cases of FMD in the following six countries: The United Kingdom (1,491), Uruguay (2), The Netherlands (26), Argentina (350), Saudi Arabia (46), and Kuwait (1).

“Utah and the United States cannot afford to let down their guard one day when it comes to this economically devastating disease,” said Commissioner Peterson. “That is why the phrase ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a **ton** of cure’ is our rallying cry this year,” he added.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) met today with top U.S. Department of Agriculture officials and other Utah agency leaders to expand strategies to keep FMD and other foreign animal diseases out of Utah. The UDAF will be working with the Utah Department of Transportation, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Quality, and others.

This is one in a series of meetings the USDA has conducted with states following an outbreak of FMD in Great Britain in February.

Commissioner Peterson says that the potential hardships that would be created by an FMD outbreak in the US will far outweigh the extra steps taken now to prevent the introduction of the disease. The economic loss to Great Britain in tourism alone approaches \$400 million dollars a week.

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“Britain is suffering through the loss of livestock, travel restrictions and the disruption of commerce because of Foot and Mouth Disease,” he said.

AG. INSPECTIONS REDOUBLE EFFORTS TO KEEP FMD OUT OF UTAH

The UDAF and the USDA are increasing inspections at the numerous control points where FMD could enter the state, and both agencies are increasing public awareness.

Brand inspectors have undergone renewed training and are stepping up activity at interstate ports of entry. They are working with department of transportation personnel to assure that proper health and travel certificates accompany livestock shipments.

Meat inspectors at livestock processing plants are on the lookout for any outward signs of foot and mouth and other diseases in animals prior to slaughter.

UDAF veterinarians are working with private vets and animal owners around the state to help both small and large livestock owners identify potential health problems.

“We have a three pronged approach to our inspection program,” said Dr. Michael R. Marshall, state veterinarian. “We’re on the farm, we’re at the processing plants and we’re on the road, making sure the established practices that have kept FMD out of the US for 72 years remain in place,” he added.

The USDA has committed to placing an “organic scanner” at the agricultural inspection station at Salt Lake International Airport. The x-ray security screening system can identify organic material, and would be used to check for foods banned from entry into the U.S.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS URGED TO TAKE STEPS TO KEEP FMD OUT DIAL 1-866-SAFGUARD

International travelers are urged to not visit farms, stockyards, zoos, packing houses, fairs, or other animal facilities in Foot and Mouth Disease infected countries for 5 days prior to travel, or bring or ship home certain food products from these countries.

All foods of animal origin and animal products from FMD infected areas are prohibited from entry into our state. Please follow all import and customs regulations to declare and have all items checked as you enter the state. An agricultural representative will assist you in clearing your carry-on products.

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UDAF ISSUES TOP 10 PREVENTION LIST

Ten Things Utahns Can Do To Keep Foot and Mouth Disease Out Of The United States

- (1) Do not visit farms in FMD infected countries.
- (2) Do not bring food home from FMD infected countries.
- (3) Do not mail/ship food home from FMD infected countries.
- (4) When returning from a foreign country, accurately complete the U.S. Customs questionnaire.
- (5) Report any known food/livestock products entering the U.S. from a FMD infected country.
- (6) Exclude international visitors from your farm for at least five days after their arrival in the U.S.
- (7) Isolate new livestock for 21 - 30 days before introducing them to your herd.
- (8) Regularly inspect livestock herds for signs of disease.
- (9) Report any suspicious animal health irregularities to the UDAF or USDA.
- (10) Report any food smuggling to the UDAF or the USDA. (801) 538-7161 or (801) 524-5010

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH BSE, OR MAD COW DISEASE

For more information about FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE or BSE (MAD COW) go to the UDAF web site at www.ag.state.ut.us. Or visit www.aphis.usda.gov.

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