

MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Gus Douglass
FROM: Patrick Atagi, Legislative & Regulatory Affairs
RE: Comments from Thursday's Foot and Mouth Disease Call
DATE: March 23, 2001

Commissioner Douglass, the following are comments from Thursday's conference call. I have listed them in bullet form in the order they were received. The draft notes from the meeting are also attached.

- Discourage visits from federal, state, and local staff to farms and ranches.
- Military personnel, equipment, aircraft, and supplies need inspection—both domestic and foreign.
- More contact and information to the states directly from the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Embargo the states that do have ports, such as what occurred in Alabama.
- Military personnel and government officials should not be 'sight seeing' (going to see the eradication efforts in a non-official capacity) when visiting infected countries. The message to the military should be passed through the Department of Defense to its pilots and other military personnel.
- USDA and NASDA members should work with top military personnel at the state level.
- Prevent "port shopping" from incoming ships. The level of inspection and protocols should be the same across all ports.
- How is the indemnity going to be made? Can we get a "formula" that we can apply early in the detection system so that an outbreak can be dealt with by the states as soon as possible. (Note: A formula was used in the Psuedorabies program.) We are concerned about how a "market price" will be influenced by quick increase in slaughter and later the possible increase in prices when there is a shortage of animals for processors.
- Are there amendments to cooperative agreements with states that need to be reviewed and approved by APHIS and states? (This assumes there are already cooperative agreements in place.)
- Can APHIS give us some uniformity in what should be the area for "hot zones" and "buffer zones?" What is the standard for depopulation in the "hot zone?" Depopulate everything or a lessor requirement? Also, different criteria in different states only leads to confusion and should be avoided.

- Will vaccines be allowed? If so, when will they be available and who will be authorized to administer?
- Where is APHIS on their risk assessment procedure?
- Will states be allowed to do serum testing as follow-up in the buffer zones?
- What are the protocol standards for testing and submission to Plum Island? If hand delivery is required, who will pay the costs?
- What dollar figures will be used to calculate indemnity?
- If possible, the states should provide the front line indemnity to farmers and ranchers, and then be reimbursed by the Federal government.
- Is FEMA working with APHIS? FEMA should be incorporated into the emergency plan, including covering issues of job loss and employment. When would emergency funds be available to the states?
- Are regional compacts available under FEMA where states can share resources across state lines?
- Suspend all agricultural exchange programs, anywhere
- Very desirable to have states immediately notified—in advance— of importation of animals, including companion animals.
- If we close our borders to Mexico and Canada, will we send our vets to their country? Do we have a plan to assist those countries?
- To immediately and thoroughly review all livestock import protocols at points of entry for Mexico and Canada.
- What is APHIS doing right now with respect to cattle moving out of Latin America, and then becoming Mexican cattle—which are then shipped to the United States?
- There is support among NASDA members of Senator Daschle's plan to halt all animal movement.
- The U.S. Post Office is a major problem for illegal meat products coming into the United States. How is this problem being addressed? We urge USDA APHIS to work with appropriate federal agencies to ensure full surveillance and decontamination of international parcel post packages.

- What is APHIS going to do about equine issues. For example, the Kentucky Derby is coming up in a month, how will those animals and their respective tack and bedding be handled?

Recommendations for exclusion and preparedness activities:

- Immediately assess PPQ staffing needs and allocate resources to fill positions; utilize state personnel as needed to fill gaps; build a cooperative system in each state with the Department of Agriculture.
- Review port inspection procedures and integrate Veterinary Services personnel into the inspection processes; the Area Offices of VS should have responsibility for passengers, food, and other animal products, not just live animals as they now have.
- Open lines of communication with state secretaries/ commissioners and state veterinarians to gather recommendations and share timely information
- Establish recommendations for appropriate precautions that farms, ranches, fairs, markets, packing plants, and livestock exhibits should take to prevent disease transmission—both for FMD and endemic diseases. (There are a wide array of recommendations out there now—the media and the producers are confused)a

Furthermore, we urge APHIS:

- To consider the benefits of restricting the importation of any grooming, training, or riding equipment/ supplies for imported equine, with the exception of a halter and lead rope.
- To promptly conduct a full risk assessment, particularly identifying the most likely methods of entry of FMD into the U.S., and implement risk management plans of action based upon the identified or perceived risks.
- To immediately ban all used farm equipment and supplies (including harness and tack) from FMD countries until further notice. Future action would depend upon the outcome of the USDA, APHIS risk assessment and risk management plan.
- To work with appropriate federal agencies to immediately install effective sanitary footbaths at the point of entry for all international conveyances (by air, sea, land) and complete surveillance and decontamination of all cargo. It should be mandatory that all passengers pass through the footbath upon disembarkation.
- To conduct a thorough and complete compliance review of the disposal of international garbage from foreign conveyances (by air, sea, land).

- To work with appropriate federal agencies to ensure that all foreign conveyances (by air, sea, land) are appropriately decontaminated of possible FMD virus.
- To immediately enter into active discussions with FEMA officials with the intent of proactively developing a national Emergency Support Function (ESF) for animal industry, with USDA being the primary responsible agency. The ESF should address both natural disaster and animal health emergencies of national importance. In addition, technical advice and assistance should be provided to states to develop regional compacts between state emergency management agencies.
- To review the FMD diagnostic capabilities at the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory on Plum Island and develop a plan of action to enhance capabilities to an appropriate level. Such plan of action should consider approaching Congress to allow FMD testing at certified state laboratories.
- To consider the Western States Animal Health Association Resolution to immediately ban the importation of livestock from each foreign country pending an acceptable FMD risk assessment of such country.
- To thoroughly review the manufacturing and distribution capabilities of FMD vaccine and the impact of its use in an FMD eradication program.