

EuFMD online training course - Foot and Mouth Disease Emergency Preparation Course FEPC - used to train 75 veterinarians in North Africa in emergency response to FMD outbreak

The European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease has carried out a number of important activities in response to outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in Tunisia, and more recently in Algeria. These have included the provision of training to veterinarians in the region through both face to face workshops and online training. These activities were part of EuFMD's support to the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA).

Recently, 75 veterinarians from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco have taken part in the online course: "Foot and Mouth Disease Emergency Preparation Course" (le cours de préparation d'urgence contre la fièvre aphteuse). The course was rapidly translated from the English version of the course with assistance provided by the European Union, EuFMD's own French speaking staff, and support from the Royal Veterinary College, UK.

The online course takes 7-10 hours to complete, and consists of two "live webinars" and four interactive modules covering FMD pathogenesis, clinical and laboratory diagnosis, FMD epidemiology, outbreak investigation and biosecurity. The participants have access throughout the course to a discussion forum where they interact with EuFMD's trainers. The discussion forum proved a particular highlight of the course, with nearly 100 separate strands of discussion opened. *Trainers were impressed by the participants' enthusiasm and engagement, with discussions covering everything from the details of viral replication to methods of FMD control in remote Saharan areas and the best way to disinfect clothing and equipment.*

The course closes with a final examination, and to date 56 of the 75 participants have been awarded a certificate for successful completion of the course. 100% of trainees responding to a survey after the course commented rated the course as "good" or "very good" and all agreed that they would recommend the course to colleagues. One commented *"This session was for me and many of my brothers and sisters, a very rewarding experience on all levels (human, cognitive and professionals)".* Participants provided a variety of suggestions for future improvements to the course, which will be incorporated as this new training method is further developed. It is hoped that the material covered during the course will enable participants to raise awareness of FMD to enable early detection should an outbreak occur in a currently free area. For those currently engaged in controlling the disease, material covered in the course should raise capabilities in diagnosis, epidemiological investigation and control.

In addition, under the same support program to REMESA, two veterinarians from each of Tunisia and Morocco attended EuFMD's August "Real Time" training course in Nakuru, Kenya, working alongside participants from Kenya, Belgium and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This was the second EuFMD Real Time Training course delivered in French (the first one was in 2009 in Turkey). This week long course gives participants (building on the e-learning background) including lead national FMD trainers the unique opportunity to carry out field diagnosis and investigation of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Trainees examined affected animals, took diagnostic samples, and interviewed the affected community in order to gain information about the epidemiology of the disease. A local area survey to identify risk factors for local disease spread was also carried out. The course also led to interesting and interactive discussions about foot-and-mouth disease control strategies.

The [EuFMD e-learning website](#), which is produced in partnership with the [Royal Veterinary College](#), hosts a number of online training courses on FMD related topics, and currently has over 500 registered users. Please contact eufmd-training@fao.org for more information.