

REPORT  
of the  
FIRST SESSION OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

Rome, 27 - 30 July, 1954

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO 54/8/4505

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INTRODUCTION

The European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease was established by the Seventh Session of the FAO Conference in December 1953, (Resolution No. 33).

According to Article XIX of the Constitution, the Commission came into force upon receipt by the Director-General of the Organization of notifications of acceptance from six member nations of the Organization. Six member nations, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia deposited their acceptance, the date of the last acceptance being 12 June 1954; this established the date of entry into force and the Director-General of the Organization notified all European nations and called the first session of the Commission on 27 July 1954.

The first session of the Commission was called specifically to elect the office bearers and the Executive Committee and to consider the administrative details concerning the functions of the Commission, as well as to plan the initial activities of the Commission.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

Certain of the obligations accepted by member countries as outlined in the Constitution of the Commission were emphasised for action on the part of governments: in particular, arrangements for regular typing of virus; countries to make veterinary experts available to visit other countries when technical assistance is required; improvement in reports and the reporting system where necessary; regular sessions of the Commission will be held in the month of March each year, unless otherwise decided.

Subject to the approval of the Director-General of FAO, it was decided to appoint Sir Thomas Dalling as Secretary of the Commission and to appoint a veterinarian and a clerical secretary to assist him.

The immediate duties of the Secretariat of the Commission are:-

- To make a detailed study of the replies to the questionnaire.
- To carry out discussions in various countries based on the questionnaire.
- To visit various countries with a view to increasing membership and obtaining further information in order to strengthen control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.
- To visit countries, to review and advise on methods of reporting.
- To maintain a close personal relationship with OIE, OEEC and other international organizations.
- To arrange for meetings of the Joint Advisory Research Committee on Foot-and-Mouth Disease.
- To prepare and maintain a register of stocks of virus and vaccine.
- To discuss with OIE the whole question of standardization of products and techniques concerned with diagnosis and control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.
- To collaborate with OIE on the question of international trade in meat products.
- To obtain and maintain information on the incidence and control of the disease in countries outside Europe.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING

DELEGATES

DENMARK

Mr. F. Wøldike Nielsen  
Chief Veterinary Officer,  
Nyropsgade 37,  
Copenhagen.

Dr. Poul Meyer,  
Assistant Chief of Department,  
Ministry of Agriculture,  
Copenhagen.

IRELAND

Mr. J.C. Nagle  
Assistant Secretary General,  
Department of Agriculture,  
Dublin.

Mr. Patrick A. Rogan,  
Director of Veterinary Services,  
Department of Agriculture,  
Dublin

NETHERLANDS

Mr. Jacques M. Van den Born,  
Chief Veterinary Officer,  
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Dr. H.S. Frenkel,  
Director, State Institute for  
Veterinary Research,  
Amsterdam.

Mr. Carolus Eygenraam  
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Via P.S. Mancini,  
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NORWAY

Mr. H. Baggerud,  
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UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. J.N. Ritchie,  
Chief Veterinary Officer,  
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,  
Hook Rise, Tolworth, Surbiton,  
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YUGOSLAVIA

Dr. Sava Mihajlović  
Director of Federal Veterinary Services,  
Belgrade

Mr. Marko Misajlović,  
Director of Foot-and-Mouth Vaccine Inst.,  
Subotica.

Mr. V. Ilić,  
Secretary of the Federal Veterinary  
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ROUMANIA	Mr. Ion Lemnaru, Secretary, Roumanian Legation, Rome.  Miss Anca Magheru, Secretary, Roumanian Legation, Rome.
SPAIN	Mr. E. Morales y Fraile, Agricultural Attaché, Spanish Embassy, Via Lima 23, Rome.
SWEDEN	Mr. Claes de König, First Secretary, Swedish Legation, Rome.
TURKEY	Mr. Faruk Barim, Chief of the Department for Infectious Diseases, Ankara.
U.S.S.R.	Mr. S. Mikhailov, Counsellor at U.S.S.R. Embassy, Via Gaeta 5, Rome.

OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF EPIZOOTICS	Prof. G. Flückiger, Directeur de l'Office vétérinaire fédéral, Viktoriastrasse 85, Bern, Switzerland.
ORGANIZATION FOR EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION	Mr. B.L. Rowan, Head of Division for Productivity in Food and Agriculture, European Productivity Agency, Château de la Muette, Rue André Pascal, Paris XVI, France.

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FAO STAFF

Dr. K.V.L. Kesteven,  
Chief, Animal Production Branch,  
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Sir Thomas Dalling,  
Senior Veterinarian  
Animal Production Branch,  
Agriculture Division,  
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Mr. N.R. Reid,  
Veterinarian,  
Animal Production Branch,  
Agriculture Division,  
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OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

Mr. J.C. Nagle - Chairman  
Mr. J.M. Van den Born - Vice-Chairman  
Mr. S. Mihajlović - Vice-Chairman  
Sir Thomas Dalling - Technical  
Secretary



## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Ralph W. Phillips, Deputy Director, Agriculture Division, FAO opened the proceedings and introduced the Director-General of FAO, Dr. P.V. Cardon, who made a speech of welcome and stressed the importance of the work of the Commission, not only in Europe, but also as an example to other parts of the world which were vitally interested in this problem. He expressed the hope that more countries would join the Commission.

J.C. Nagle was elected Chairman of the Commission. J.M. Van den Born (Netherlands) and Sava Mihajlović (Yugoslavia) were elected Vice-Chairmen.

The Chairman raised a number of points of procedure. It was agreed that Observers from countries and international organizations be free to attend meetings of the Commission and its Committees until the next regular meeting of the Commission.

The Delegation of Yugoslavia proposed that a further item on the Agenda should be "Disposal of carcasses of cattle used in the production of Vaccine." With this addition, the Draft Agenda was approved.

An Executive Committee was set up, consisting of J.C. Nagle (Chairman) J.M. Van den Born and Sava Mihajlović (Vice-Chairmen), F. Wøldike Nielsen, H. Baggerud and J.N. Ritchie.

The Delegation of Denmark explained that Denmark was interested in the Commission, although it had been hoped that Western Germany would become a full member. In fact, at one time it was a condition of Denmark's joining that Western Germany would also be a member. Denmark, however, has now become a member without Western Germany but careful attention would be given during the next year or two to the success of the Commission, on which would depend Denmark's remaining a member.

The Delegation of the Netherlands regretted that neither Western Germany nor Belgium had become members. The Netherlands, however, takes the view that it is best to make a beginning now with the Commission and to have plans in operation to deal with any future outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

The Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that, although it would have been better to have had more members, the Commission must begin work now.

The Delegation of Yugoslavia spoke of the limited membership but was enthusiastic that the Commission, even in its present form, could do good work and make very satisfactory plans for the future.

The Delegation of Norway agreed with the remarks made by the Delegation of Denmark and stated that Norway may have to reconsider its membership unless, in the near future, more countries participate in the work.

The Representative of OEEC said that his Organization was much interested in the work of the Commission and appreciated the initiative taken by FAO in forming the Commission and in setting the work into motion. He thought that some of the delegates spoke with too pessimistic a voice, whereas even with small numbers, much good work could be done. He thought that the observers who were present could do much to influence their countries to become members of the Commission.

The Observer from FOA expressed the good wishes of his Organization for the success of the work of the Commission. His Organization realised that Foot-and-Mouth Disease is one of the major problems in Western Europe and, through OEEC, has been assisting countries in the control of the disease and, he felt sure, would continue to do so.

The Observer from ECA spoke of the damage to the livestock industry sustained in Europe by the recent outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease. He remarked on the support which his Organization would give to the work of the Commission because of its importance.

The Observer from Italy stated that Italy was not yet officially a member. It was the intention of Italy to become a member and most of the governmental procedures have now been accomplished. It was merely a matter of time until the proposal was ratified by Parliament.

The Delegation of Ireland laid emphasis on the need to extend membership of the Commission.

The Observer from Belgium spoke on the need for each country to have its own national organization and gave an account of how Belgium had dealt with the numerous outbreaks which have taken place during the last few years. He spoke on the vulnerability of Belgium and how necessary it was to have large amounts of vaccine available to meet with the needs of the country.

In summing up this part of the proceedings, the Chairman referred to the two points of view, the optimism of international organizations like FOA and OEEC and the somewhat pessimistic view expressed by the Delegations of some countries. He felt sure that from small beginnings the Commission would develop into an extremely useful body.

The Executive Committee met on 27 - 28 July. The Report of the Meeting of the Special Committee on Foot-and-Mouth Disease held in Rome on 21 - 23 September and the summary of the replies to the questionnaire were taken as working documents.

The Executive Committee submitted the following report, which the Commission accepted and decided to adopt as part of its report:

#### Staffing

With regard to the staffing of the Secretariat of the Commission, the Executive Committee unanimously recommended that the Director-General should be asked to appoint Sir Thomas Dalling as Secretary. It was appreciated that it would be difficult for FAO to spare his full-time services for any extended period but, bearing in mind the importance of the work of the Commission and the need for setting it functioning smoothly immediately, it was hoped that this request could be met.

During this time a well qualified veterinarian should be recruited to devote his whole time to assisting Sir Thomas. In due course, if his qualifications prove satisfactory to the Commission, this veterinarian might take over the duties of Secretary. Nominations in this regard were invited from members of the Executive Committee to reach the Director-General of FAO before 15 September 1954.

#### Cooperation with International Bodies.

The Executive Committee fully realises the need for the closest cooperation of the Commission with OIE, OEEC and any other international body with interests in Foot-and-Mouth Disease control. To this end it was decided that there be the closest personal contacts between the Secretariat of the Commission and OIE, and further, that the Secretary would be expected to spend a large proportion of his time in the Office of OIE.

#### Technical Advice

In order that all European countries requiring assistance should have technical advice on Foot-and-Mouth Disease, it is recommended that visits by experts having a special knowledge should be arranged between countries. It is hoped that FAO would give sympathetic consideration to requests for technical assistance. In this connection the work already carried out by FAO in two countries in Europe was noted. It was decided that the Secretariat of the Commission would also be available for this purpose and for any business connected with the work of the Commission.

### Collection of Information

It was decided to implement the proposals of the September Committee in regard to the collection of information. These were as follows:

"The work of collecting comprehensive information would be handled in cooperation with the OIE. In particular, the Committee recommended that a survey be made as soon as possible of the present international reporting system; that direct interchange of information on outbreaks between countries should be encouraged and that information on all outbreaks be sent to the OIE and the Commission, in particular concerning the following points:

The location of the outbreak and type of virus, by telegram;

The extent of the outbreak;

The number and species of animals involved;

The probable source of the infection;

The character of the outbreak with particular reference to its virulence and rate of spread.

"At the same time countries should forward an appreciation of the situation created by the outbreak, with particular reference to the possibility of further spread and the importance of the outbreak. It was considered necessary to develop a system of map reference to indicate the location of outbreaks."

Considerable emphasis was placed on the recommendation of the September Committee concerning the substance of reports which should be sent when outbreaks occur and during their course. It was believed that appreciation of the state of outbreaks might lead to an improvement in preventive measures in adjoining countries.

It was decided that the Secretariat should give guidance to countries in the preparation of such appreciations and reports and ensure, in cooperation with OIE, the rapid dissemination of all relevant information.

### Research Work

The observer from OEEC made reference to the possibility of funds becoming available through the European Productivity Agency for certain projects of a practical nature in support of the Commission's work. The Committee welcomed this suggestion. It confirmed that the list of applied research projects, which had been drawn up by the September Committee, was of very great importance and that the results of such studies would have immediate application in the control of foot-and-mouth disease.

Already a Working Party on Animal Health of OEEC had recommended that three studies of this kind were worthy of immediate support, viz. vaccination with polyvalent vaccines, the relative value of intradermal and subcutaneous injection of vaccines and the duration of immunity induced by vaccines. In view of this possibility and of the interest of OIE, it was agreed that the Secretariat should endeavour to arrange that a small advisory committee be set up jointly between the Commission, OIE and OEEC. This Joint Committee should review the field of research and all the items suggested by the September Committee to which two further items were added: (1) the effect of widespread epizootics on the production of virus for vaccine production and (2) the establishment of precise evidence to evaluate safe methods of disposal of carcasses of animals used for vaccine production. It was considered that there was a possibility that items other than the three already recommended by the OEEC Working Party might require to be given priority, but a review of all the work presently being undertaken at various research institutions would help the Joint Committee to formulate its advice.

It was possible also that funds might become available from various sources other than OEEC.

#### Standardization of Products used in Diagnosis and Control

The Committee was informed that there is in being a Committee of OIE which is studying the broad field of standardization of biological products. At a recent meeting of this Committee it was decided that consideration should now be given to the question of the standardization of sera used in the typing of strains of foot-and-mouth disease virus. It was decided that the Secretariat should cooperate with this Committee.

The Executive Committee also realized the need for the availability of strains of virus of known antigenic quality for vaccine production.

An arrangement should be made for an institute to maintain such stocks of virus and to prepare and hold stocks of standard anti-sera for distribution to other institutions. It should be understood, however, that only strains of types A, O and C will be distributed. It was agreed that the Virus Research Station, Pirbright, England, would be a suitable institution for these purposes and the Director-General of FAO is requested to communicate with the Government of the United Kingdom with a view to ascertaining if arrangements can be made for this purpose.

In addition to standardization, the Committee lays considerable stress on the need for standard techniques and methods of interpretation of the tests applied in the typing of viruses. To this end the Executive Committee endorsed fully the recommendation

of the September Committee concerning the holding of seminars and it was decided that the Secretariat cooperate with OEEC and OIE on this subject.

#### Register of Stocks

It was explained that in view of the differing dates when the replies to the questionnaire were made, it would not be practicable to establish a register of stocks of vaccine and virus on the basis of these replies. It was decided that the Secretariat of the Commission should establish as soon as possible and maintain such a register.

#### Questionnaire

With regard to the questionnaire, replies were received from 16 countries. A great deal of valuable information has been provided which will require detailed examination in order fully to appreciate the position of foot-and-mouth disease in individual countries. It was decided that the Secretariat should further consider the replies and use the questionnaire as a basis for further discussions in the various countries.

#### Typing of Virus

The Committee supported the recommendation of the September Committee on the importance of routine typing of virus. It recommends that virus should be typed regularly in the course of an epizootic and particularly emphasised that virus should be typed from initial outbreaks (outbreaks having no obvious connection with any of the outbreaks in the country); from outbreaks where vaccine has apparently failed to protect and where pigs only are apparently affected.

#### Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Countries outside Europe

It was decided that the Commission should obtain information as soon as possible through FAO, the OIE and other organisations on the incidence and control measures for foot-and-mouth disease in countries outside Europe so that adequate precautions may be taken to prevent the introduction of the disease. The Commission realized the serious situation which might arise from the introduction of any type of virus and considered that the Commission should, at a very early date, recommend precautionary measures and foster the adoption of drastic eradication measures if such an exotic type of virus is introduced into Europe.

#### International Trade in Meat

Attention was drawn to the importance of the international trade in meat in connection with disease control and it was decided that the Secretariat should collaborate with OIE in the collection of information and in the study of this subject.