

# Foot And Mouth Disease Update: Down But Not Out

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Based on a lack of news reports and newspaper headlines, one would think that the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in the United Kingdom was over. Some of the British news Websites are three or more days behind on information. Most news stories concern litigation issues surrounding how the outbreak was handled. One Website has received awards for its coverage of the disaster. Is the British outbreak over? Not by any means. Over the past two weeks, there have been three new cases per day on average. Although this is much lower than at the height of the outbreak, there still are some high hurdles to clear. Current predictions suggest it will be early next year before the outbreak is considered controlled.

The current FMD outbreak in Britain has been one of the worst in modern history. As of the first week in July, there have been 1,832 confirmed cases with 8,610 infected premises. Total animals identified for slaughter has now reached 3,516,000. The slaughtered animals include 550,000 cattle; 2,820,000 sheep; 129,000 pigs; and 2,000 goats. Although estimates are considered inaccurate, the British Agriculture Ministry estimates 15,000 animals await slaughter and 28,000 await disposal. It is hard to imagine the agricultural devastation that has taken place in this country as a result of this disease.

Although it seemed like Great Britain was the focal point for FMD, it was not the only country battling a current outbreak.

Information provided by the World Organization for Animal Health, 25 different countries other than the UK and Europe had a recognized outbreak of FMD since the beginning of 2000. At present, there are only three continents (North America, Australia, and Antarctica) that are not infected with FMD. All other continents have endemic problems with FMD in various countries.

What is more disconcerting is how many countries in South America currently have FMD outbreaks. Columbia and Brazil, both countries that use a vaccination prevention policy, had recent small outbreaks. Argentina, a large beef exporting country, is currently experiencing an outbreak exceeding 1,429 cases as of June 2001. Another South American country, Uruguay, has had 1,596 cases through June 2001. Uruguay has practiced a vaccination policy to control the outbreak and legally maintain some FMD free zones.

More disconcerting than the potential closeness of these outbreaks to our shores is the fact that a recent commercial venture was attempting to import up to 30,000 head of dairy heifers from Uruguay to dairies in

Oregon and Pennsylvania earlier last year. The reality is that FMD will always be potentially knocking at our door. Even after the current headlines fade, we must not become complacent with our attitudes toward FMD or any other disease. We must focus on prevention (i.e., biosecurity protocols), because we cannot afford the devastation wrought by a disease outbreak — foreign or domestic.

## Penn State Dairymen's Club Solicits Service Award Nominations

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Penn State Dairymen's Club is soliciting nominations for their annual service award. The honor is rotated through three industry segments — producers, industry representatives, and educators. This year the club will recognize an educator in Pennsylvania who has supported the Pennsylvania dairy industry and/or Penn State agricultural programs. The nominee could be an extension agent, university employee or ag educator in Pennsylvania.

This year will mark the 10th award. Last year's award went to Obie Snider, a dairy producer who has been active in many organizations, including the Penn State Board of Trustees. Previous winners include Robert Patton (Monsanto), William Conyngham (Hillside Farm), Larry Specht (Penn State), Dean Amick (Pa. DHIA), Sam Williams (Bryncoed Farm), Steve Spencer (Penn State), Duane Norman (USDA), Jay Houser (Penn-Del Farm), and Larry Muller (Penn State).

The winner will be recognized at the Penn State Dairymen's Club annual meeting on Friday, Nov. 9 at 6:30 p.m. in State College. To make a reservation for the dinner meeting, contact Beth Raney at 405 Ag Admin., University Park, PA 16802, phone (814) 863-2525, or send e-mail to [bnrl@psu.edu](mailto:bnrl@psu.edu).

All nominations of dairy producers should be submitted to Jayne Sebright at P.O. Box 529 East Berlin, PA 17316 or send via e-mail to [rjsebright@super-net.com](mailto:rjsebright@super-net.com). Deadline for nominations is Oct. 12. There is no specific format for nominations. However, items that may be discussed are leadership in the agricultural community, personal involvement in the dairy industry, and personal achievement and contributions to local organizations and youth.

The Penn State Dairymen's Club is a non-profit support group whose mission is to enhance activities between the dairy industry and the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. New members are always welcome. Contact Beth Raney at 405 Ag Admin., University Park, PA 16802, phone (814) 863-2525.