**APPENDIX 1**

Members of the Devon Inquiry Committee

**Professor Ian Mercer CBE**
Professor Mercer was the first Chief Executive of the Countryside Council for Wales. In 1995 he became the first Secretary General of the Association of National Park Authorities, a position he held until his retirement in 2001.

**Clr Nolan Clarke**
Devon County Councillor for Bovey Tracey (Liberal Democrat)

**Clr Christine Marsh**
Devon County Councillor for Okehampton Rural (Conservative)

**Clr Richard Westlake**
Devon County Councillor for Exeter Stoke Hill and Polsloe (Labour)

**Clr Roger Giles**
Devon County Councillor for Ottery St Mary Rural (Independent)

**Clr David Poole**
Torridge District Councillor for the Waldon Ward (Independent)

**Clr Peter Hill**
West Devon Borough Councillor for the Chagford Ward (Independent)

**Clr Eric Ley**
North Devon District Councillor for the parishes of Bishops Nympton, East Anstey, Knowstone, Molland, Twitchen and West Anstey (Independent)
APPENDIX 2

Terms of Reference of the Devon Foot and Mouth Inquiry

To conduct an investigation in public into the Foot and Mouth epidemic in Devon and to make recommendations to the Government's inquiries into FMD and the future of farming and the countryside for:

i) the tackling of any future major animal disease outbreak;

ii) the creation of a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector which contributes to a thriving and sustainable rural economy and advances environmental, economic, health and animal welfare goals.

In carrying out its task the Inquiry will take into account:

• the impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak on the economy (including tourism), environment and health of the communities of Devon;

• the contribution the Devon Recovery Plan can make to the future reform of agriculture, food production and promotion and land use, and to the creation of a sustainable rural economy;

• the effectiveness of the various agencies involved in the response to the 2001 outbreak, their inter-relationship and relationship with local communities, and identify any constraints such as resources, communications, command and control systems, and training.

And that the findings be:

• made widely available to the public, stakeholders and key opinion formers such as MPs, MEPs and the media;

• used to support the county's bid for Government funding for the Devon Recovery Plan.
APPENDIX 3

Programme of the Devon FMD Inquiry Hearings

HELD AT COUNTY HALL, EXETER  8th –12th OCTOBER 2001

Monday, 8th October 2001 – Strategic Issues
• David Hill, Devon County Chairman, National Farmers’ Union
• Jeremy Worth, SW Regional Director, The Countryside Agency
• Mary Quicke, J G Quicke and Partners (cheesesmakers)
• Tim Brooks, Devon Branch, Country Landowners and Business Association
• Simon Hodgson, South West Regional Development Agency
• Mark Tomlinson, Local Resident
• Brian Aldridge, Jo Skinner, John Pratt and Ron Dawson, Local Residents
• Colin Latham, John Martin, Edward Martin and David May, Farmers

Tuesday, 9th October 2001 - Business and Tourism
• John Varley (Estates Director) and John Bain, Clinton Devon Estates
• Alex Raeder, Senior Land Agent, Devon Region, National Trust
• Diane Lethbridge, Taste of the West
• Colin Lomax, Acting Head of Economic Development, Devon County Council
• John Fowler, Chairman, John Fowler Holidays
• Carol Hutchings, Chairman, South Devon Tourism Association
• David Andrew, Assistant Director, Environment Directorate, Devon County Council
• Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive, South West Tourism
• Richard Pringle, Stags Auctioneers and Estate Agents

Wednesday, 10th October 2001 - Health and Communities
• Mark Raven, Headteacher, Black Torrington Church of England Primary School
• Mark Goodman (County Organiser) and Les Hayward, Devon Federation of Young Farmers’ Club
• Barbara Thomas, Vice-Chairman, Devon Association of Parish Councils
• Rev Paul Fitzpatrick, Northmoor Team Ministry
• Dr Nigel Stone, National Park Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority
• Tania Haycocks (Chairman) and Margaret Noon (Chairman of Organisation Sub-Committee), Devon Federation of Women’s Institutes
• Brian Warren, Stephen Dennis and Peter Clarke, Farm Crisis Network
• Dr Mike Owen, Director of Public Health, North and East Devon Health Authority
• Jim Pile, Farmer
• Sir John Evans (Chief Constable) and Superintendent Mike Sarsfield, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

Thursday, 11th October 2001 - Communication
• Hilary Allison, Peter Doyle and Brian Nute, Communications and Information, Devon County Council
• Graham Gilbert, Managing Director, Great Western Radio
• Chris Foreman, Senior Output Editor, Carlton TV
• Carol Trewin, Farming Editor, Western Morning News
• Richard Hill, Emergency Planning Service, Devon County Council
• Ken Lancaster and Alan Perryman, Kennerleigh Parish Meeting
• Sue Bizley, Citizens’ Advice Bureau
• William Norman, David Morgans and Kenneth Dykes, Knowstone Parish Council
• David Incoll, Chief Executive, West Devon Borough Council, Richard Brassington, Chief Executive, Torridge District Council and Andrew Millie, Assistant Environmental Health Manager, North Devon District Council

Friday, 12th October 2001 - Environment and Animal Welfare
• Geoff Bateman (Devon Area Manager), Malcolm Chudley and Martin Booth, Environment Agency
• Dr Nick Atkinson, Chief Executive, Dartmoor National Park Authority
• Mark Robins (SW Regional Policy Officer) and Frances Winder (Agricultural Policy Officer), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
• Roger Rivett, Head of Trading Standards, Devon County Council
• Wendy Vere, DAL Vere and Partners (veterinary surgeons)
• Clare Broom, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Plymouth (Seale-Hayne)
• John Tresidder, SW Regional Superintendent, RSPCA
• Phil Davies, Team Manager, Western Counties Veterinary Association
• Phil Collins, Devon Team, English Nature
• Hugh Thomas and Mal Treharne (Public Relations Director), Countryside Alliance
APPENDIX 4

Chronology of Devon County Council’s Response

TO THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE CRISIS IN DEVON  FEBRUARY-DECEMBER 2001

“Openness and a desire to get at the facts, revealing the realities rather than the perceptions of the impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak in Devon, have been at the core of Devon County Council’s Inquiry into Foot and Mouth Disease.

“In just over two months since the Inquiry was announced at the end of July, Devon County Council has shown not just a willingness but also a determination to do something for which there seems to be little or no political appetite in Westminster – that is to hold a public inquiry into the effects of the worst human and animal health disaster to have affected Britain in decades.”

Carol Trewin, Former Farming Editor,
Western Morning News

February 24
First FMD case reported in Devon. Devon County Council’s Trading Standards Service duty animal health officer receives report of suspected outbreak at Highampton from MAFF duty vet. Head of Trading Standards attends briefing at MAFF’s regional HQ. Trading Standards officers despatched to the Highampton area that night and work into the early hours in driving snow serving restriction orders and erecting warning signs. Trading Standards alerts duty Media and PR officer who liaises with MAFF Press Office.

February 25
First news conference at MAFF regional HQ. Plans are made to commit the whole of the Trading Standards Service staff — around 45 officers — to provide an outbreak response team working in shifts seven days a week. Trading Standards Operations Centre and farmers’ helpline set up. County Council issues emergency advice to the public and staff on minimising risk.

February 26
MAFF announces scheme allowing animals from farms outside the Infected Areas to be moved to slaughter under licences to be issued by local authorities. County Council introduces 12 point risk reduction plan including suspension of routine highway maintenance in the Infected Areas, cancellation of non-essential visits, and advice to the public on avoiding contact with farm animals and not using footpaths. All non-emergency Trading Standards work suspended, neighbouring authorities and other advice agencies warned. A County Council public information helpline is set up.

February 27
County Council sets up special Foot and Mouth advice and information website. Links to other useful sites are added as the outbreak progresses. Council urges farmers to check animal movement records to speed up tracking process and also warns farmers to halt livestock transport. MAFF publishes Order allowing local authorities to close footpaths and bridleways.

February 28
All public rights of way in rural areas of Devon — nearly 3,500 miles — are closed by the County Council, as are Country Parks. Council distributes information and closure notices to parish councils and landowners. Details and notices are also published on the Internet. Civic amenity sites are closed in Infected Areas.

March 1
County Council convenes first of a series of regular briefing meetings between senior Councillors, officers and NFU officials. Council issues the first of a series of Chief Executive’s briefings to parish councils and public.

March 5
MAFF implements new licensing scheme. County Council drafts in additional staff from other units to assist Trading Standards in handling hundreds of licence applications.
March 6
County Council’s Executive Committee commissions Exeter University’s Agricultural Economics Unit to investigate the economic impact of Foot and Mouth. NFU Regional Director presents Executive Committee with an update. Short-term funding for agencies providing advice services to farmers is authorised. Report by Chief Executive recommends Government considers the cost-effectiveness of vaccination as an alternative to slaughter.

March 12
Limited re-introduction of non-Foot and Mouth work by Trading Standards to provide some kind of service to the wider public.

March 14
Council welcomes setting up of Rural Task Force. County Leader of the Council invites Prime Minister to Devon to see impact and calls for better cross-departmental co-ordination by Government, improved communications between MAFF, local government and the farming community, and logistical expertise to speed up the disposal of slaughtered livestock.

March 16
Government introduces Order giving the power to lift public rights of way restrictions by a declaration, made either by a Minister or a local authority.

March 20
County Council calls for postponement of May elections.

March 28
County Council publicises its Holiday Line call centre and tourism website as key sources of information about what visitors can see and do in Devon despite the outbreak.

March 29
County Council’s Executive Committee publishes initial findings of the Exeter University study which, based on the position at March 19, estimates up to 1,200 jobs in farming and related industries, and 8,700 jobs in the tourist industry could be lost. It also estimates a total loss of £280 million to the county’s economy (equivalent to 3.5% of total Gross Domestic Product). Executive Committee instructs officers to commence work on a Devon recovery programme.

April 2
Leader of the County Council flying into London from Budapest, receives call from Chief Executive alerting him to a request for a meeting with the Prime Minister for a briefing on Foot and Mouth in Devon the following day.

April 3
Downing Street meeting. Leader briefs Prime Minister on the County Council’s plans for a phased re-opening of footpaths in consultation with MAFF, NFU and landowners. He welcomes decision to postpone elections to June 7, but warns Mr Blair of the scale of the economic impact on Devon and urges him to appoint a local Task Force to co-ordinate a recovery programme.

April 5
County Council hosts the first of a series of consultation meetings with key stakeholders — NFU, CLA, MAFF, National Trust, National Parks and other landowners — on proposals for phased re-openings of the county’s public rights of way network. A major consultation of local landowners is also launched. Senior Councillor Sir Simon Day calls for European aid at Committee of the Regions meeting in Brussels.

April 8
County Council launches tourism promotion campaign aimed at key audience in the Midlands. In anticipation of footpath re-openings for Easter, full page ads are taken in the Sunday Mercury, the largest regional Sunday paper, with the message “Rediscover the delights of Devon”. The advert promotes the fact that 90 per cent of the county’s attractions are open for visitors to enjoy.

April 9
Launch of “Green for Go” campaign re-opening 140 public rights of way including 25% of the coastal network in time for the Easter holiday. County Council issues guidance to the public on walking in the countryside and circulates information to tourism information centres, libraries and parishes. Advice from MAFF and the Police leads to disinfectant matting laid down by District Council being removed from roads in Mid Devon.

April 10
County Council’s mobile library service is reintroduced for communities on A and B roads. Moorland routes and stops near farms remain suspended.
April 11
County Council urges Government to relax animal movement restrictions to help ease the serious livestock welfare problems.

April 12
County Council announces its Operations Centre will be open throughout Easter.

April 19
County Council holds first all-party Rural Task Group meeting with tourism and agriculture representatives to plan a recovery programme for the Devon economy. Council agrees to a series of measures including developing a draft recovery plan, leading a major tourism promotion campaign, and providing co-ordinated information on sources of benefits, grants and business advice.

April 20
County Council’s Trading Standards inform farmers that new licensing arrangements mean some farms within the Infected Areas can move livestock direct to slaughter.

April 26
County Council Chief Executive joins Chief Executive of South West Tourism to brief House of Commons Culture, Media and Sports Select Committee about the impact on the tourism industry.

May 3
Ahead of the May Bank Holiday, County Council re-opens 80 public rights of way in second phase of “Green for Go” campaign. 45 per cent of the coastal footpath network is now open.

May 8
County Council launches countywide consultation on its draft £180 million Devon Recovery Plan. Followed up with detailed briefings of MEPs, Government Office South West, the Regional Development Agency, European Commission officials and local representatives on the national Foot and Mouth Rural Task Force.

May 9
In partnership with Devon’s district councils, County Council tackles the concern that Foot and Mouth will lead to low turn-outs for the rescheduled elections on June 7 by launching a campaign to encourage people to take up their right to a postal vote.

May 15
County Council’s Executive Committee authorises setting up a special Foot and Mouth Recovery Unit dedicated to developing and co-ordinating the recovery programme working in partnership with other agencies.

May 25
County Council calls for public inquiry into the handling of the Foot and Mouth crisis.

May 26
Following consultation with landowners and stakeholders, 1,440 footpaths and bridleways are re-opened - representing 90 per cent of the footpath network outside the Infected Areas.

June 6
Footpaths and bridleways across South Dartmoor are re-opened. Renewed guidance issued to the public on walking in the countryside.

June 7
General Election and County Council elections in Devon.

June 16
County Council scales down footpath re-openings in Mid and East Devon in response to Foot and Mouth outbreak on the Somerset border.

June 17
Last confirmed case of Foot and Mouth reported in Devon. Total number of cases in the County reaches 173. 4,500 Devon farms are under MAFF “Form D” livestock movement restrictions.

June 21
County Hall hosts Devon Recovery Plan conference attended by 150 organisations and key opinion formers, including MEPs, Government Office for the South West, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, South West Regional Development Agency, South West Tourism, the NFU and many others. Conference endorses all-party support for the £180 million Plan.

June 30
North Devon coastal footpath re-opens. News welcomed by South West Tourism. Over half the county's footpath network is now open.
July 11
County Council’s Executive Chairman and Chief Executive, supported by District Council, Tourism and NFU representatives, give presentation on the Devon Recovery Plan to the Government’s Rural Task Force. Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael commends the County Council’s quick action in pulling together a Recovery Plan and authorises detailed discussions with civil servants.

July 17
Updated research by Exeter University’s Agricultural Economics Unit estimates the epidemic may cost the county £316 million in lost income (2.86 per cent of GDP) and puts total potential job losses over 12 months at 7,805.

July 20
Devon is one of just six authorities to be given a temporary exemption from the Government's decision to lift the blanket closure of footpaths. The decision recognises that the County Council’s measured programme of re-opening footpaths in phases is aiding the county’s economic recovery whilst following veterinary guidance on prudent Foot and Mouth precautions. Some 63 per cent - over 4,000 footpaths - of the county network is now open. At the request of the NFU, County Council re-issues guidance to dog walkers about walking in the countryside.

July 25
Public rights of way re-open across Exmoor National Park.

July 30
County Council’s Executive gives all-party backing to holding a Devon Foot and Mouth Inquiry with an instruction that its findings be passed on to the Government and any national inquiry into the crisis. 75 per cent of Devon’s footpath network is now open.

July to August
County Council issues on average 1,100 animal movement licences a week.

August 1
Infected Area status lifted in Devon.

August 9
County Council launches “Pledge For Devon” scheme at the Devon County Show (postponed from May) to encourage staff and public to pledge an action or series of actions in support of Devon’s hard-hit food producers, tourist industry and the countryside in general. Council joins forces with RDA, Countryside Agency and National Parks to present the “Devon Forward” exhibition at the Show, highlighting what the county has to offer and promoting local produce. County Council gives cautious welcome to Government’s announcement of three national inquiries.

August 11
Council re-opens footpaths in North and West Devon, previously the worst Foot and Mouth affected areas. 95 per cent of the network now open.

August 20
County Council launches consultation with farmers on the potential for scaling back the 7-day Licensing helpline.

August 22
Council announces Devon Foot and Mouth Inquiry with all party and District Council support. Terms of reference are published and written submissions invited. Special website and call centre is set up to handle public interest in the Inquiry.

August 23
Professor Ian Mercer CBE is announced as the independent Chairman of the Devon Inquiry.

September 3
Lord Haskins, the Government’s rural recovery coordinator, visits Devon on a fact-finding mission. He says the Devon Inquiry will help the national investigations and commends the county’s Foot and Mouth recovery partnership.

September 7
County Council’s licensing helpline scaled back to six days a week (half day Saturday).

September 17
Number of licences issued by County Council on any one day peaks at 360.

September 24
Government introduces “Autumn Movement” scheme for cattle and pigs.

September 28
Closing date for Devon FMD Inquiry submissions. Some 380 submissions are received with evidence from
a wide range of organisations and people from all walks of life including farmers, vets, hoteliers, holiday attraction owners, business people, MPs, MEPs, clergy, headteachers, lecturers and local councillors.

October 1
Government introduces “Autumn Movement” scheme for sheep. County Council’s Trading Standards sets up new licensing centre with additional temporary staff to cope with extra workload.

October 8 - 12
The Devon Foot and Mouth Inquiry hearings in public are held at County Hall in Exeter and broadcast live via the Internet in collaboration with Eclipse and BBC Online. Fifty witnesses, including RDA, Environment Agency, NFU, Police and Countryside Agency, give evidence. Internet service receives 60,000 “hits”. Widespread national and regional media coverage.

October 10
Lord Haskins publishes “Rural Recovery after Foot and Mouth Disease” coinciding with publication of the Rural Task Force’s report — both documents support the aims of the Devon Recovery Plan.

October 18
County Council publishes new report, “Impact of Foot and Mouth”, which says Foot and Mouth has halved the income of small firms in the worst affected areas of the county, cites research suggesting the epidemic has largely led to the loss of 3,000 jobs, and warns that small firms have not achieved the income required to sustain them through the coming winter.

October 24
DEFRA’s written response to the Devon FMD Inquiry’s questions is received by County Council.

November 27
Government declares Devon FMD ‘free’ by removing its ‘At Risk’ status. 96% of public rights of way now open.

November 28
County Council’s Development Control Committee gives DEFRA a four month deadline to close the Ash Moor Burial Pit site.

December 1
County Council presents review of impact of FMD on public rights of way network to the annual meeting of the Devon Parish Paths Partnership (P3).
APPENDIX 5

Overview of Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease

IN DEVON IN 2001 (as at October 2001)

Farms affected (peak figures)
• 173 confirmed cases (last confirmed Devon case – 17th June 2001).
• 4,500 farms under DEFRA “Form D” livestock movement restrictions (Total farms in the county - 10,500)

Livestock slaughtered
Sheep    -    282,817
Cattle   -    72,433
Pigs     -    30,845
Goats    -    108

Livestock Movement Licences issued by Devon County Council
34,000

Footpaths closed - peak figure
3,000 miles (95% of Devon’s footpath network was re-opened by August 2001)
APPENDIX 6

Original Questions for DEFRA

(set out in a letter dated 27th September 2001)

1. Drawing upon the Department’s experience in Devon, in other parts of the UK, and its knowledge of actions taken in Europe and elsewhere, what lessons have DEFRA learned
   • in terms of containment of the disease;
   • in terms of eradication of the disease?

2. Bearing in mind the immediacy of media engagement in any emergency what proposals for improving the chain of communication both within and beyond DEFRA does the Department suggest?

3. Given that farm businesses subject to form D restrictions suffered significant losses in income, were ineligible for compensation and may not access the Farm Business Advisory Service or the Business Recovery Fund, what practical and/or financial help can the Department offer or suggest?

4. What should this outbreak teach us about the future of British farming and the food production/distribution system?

5. The Secretary of State has spoken about her Department developing a Sustainable Development Strategy and agrees that reform of CAP’s market support and direct payments to farmers is necessary. Is the Department able to explain how the Strategy will affect Devon businesses and how it sees the direction farming in Devon will take after CAP reform?
APPENDIX 7

The Contents of a Letter from Rt Hon Alun Michael

Dated 23 October 2001 from The Minister for Rural Affairs Rt Hon Alun Michael MP to The Chief Executive of Devon County Council

DEVON FOOT AND MOUTH INQUIRY
I am now able to reply to the questions you sent us on 27 September, in order to assist the Devon County Council Foot and Mouth Inquiry.

First, let me explain the way in which we are ensuring that the handling of the Foot and Mouth outbreak is considered fully and that all relevant lessons are learned. The Prime Minister has announced two independent inquiries. Once we are sure that FMD has been eradicated, Dr Iain Anderson will look at the lessons to be learned from the current outbreak and the way the Government should handle any future major animal disease outbreak. Separately, the Royal Society Study, chaired by Sir Brian Follett, will undertake a scientific review of questions relating to the transmission, prevention, and control of epidemic outbreaks of infectious diseases in Livestock. You can find further information from www.number-10.gov.uk.

As I indicated in my letter of 20 September, we are willing to help as much as we are able with your Inquiry, but it would not be proper for us to anticipate the findings of the national Inquiries into the Foot and Mouth outbreak. To an extent, some of the questions you have asked appear to be inviting us to do this, and I am sure you will appreciate the difficulty. In relation to question 1, we see the Devon Inquiry as providing a local perspective on the outbreak and making a contribution to the government Inquiries, as I think you do yourselves.

The “Lessons Learned” Inquiry has not yet formally begun - in order not to divert energy away from the eradication of FMD until that has been achieved - but you can forward your comments by email to andersoninquiry@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk, or send them by post to the Anderson Inquiry, Room 207, Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ. The Royal Society has already started its inquiry and can be contacted at The Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AG.

I should mention that the Policy Commission on Food and Farming will be making suggestions to Government about the long-term, and the events of the last four months are also being scrutinised by others - such as the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the Select Committee on Agriculture - whose findings will help inform public debate.

In question 2, you asked what proposals we had for improving communications both within the Department and externally. Essentially there are two aspects to this. One is the Department’s administrative arrangements and liaison with peerage on the ground, particularly farmers. The other is communication via the press and media, including responses to media coverage and comments from other parties.

On the first of these, we are reviewing our internal communication processes to ensure that we share knowledge more effectively. DEFRA officials have set up regular telephone conferences with our regional offices so that we can keep our staff informed of policy developments and we are reviewing our channels for internal communications so that information is properly targeted.

Regular stakeholder meetings are held by our animal health teams both nationally and locally to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to get their views across and comment on and feed into our planning. Organisations, including local government and bodies like the CLA and NFU, also work with us by using their own communication channels to convey information to their members. Stakeholder meetings also provide an invaluable opportunity for Ministers to have direct communication with the public.
It has to be recognised that there is no easy way of achieving simple and timely communications at a time of crisis, especially when the issues are complex and the future trend of the emergency - as with FMD - is difficult to predict. Those who seek answers to queries need immediate answers, while those involved in administrative, logistical or veterinary judgements have to develop - often under great pressure - decisions which will be robust in a variety of circumstances. There are practical difficulties in an emergency in keeping front line field staff sufficiently up to date with policy developments to enable them to deal with all the questions that farmers pose. We are now working to improve information flows to our staff and to equip them to pass it on to the farmers.

On the second aspect, DEFRA is continuously striving to improve public communications and to provide information that is factual and clear. Our media activity is informed by the need to disseminate information, demonstrate openness, provide clear explanations, provide accessibility to information to key personnel and to assist in the disease control effort by conveying timely and relevant messages.

Public information campaign strategy is determined by research. We follow standard procedures to produce public information material. All our campaigns are objective based with effectiveness measures built in. As I am sure you are aware, methods of communicating to date have varied from large public information campaigns on biosecurity to individual targeted mailshots, production of leaflets, videos etc.

None of these approaches is perfect. For instance, we launched a video urging stringency in biosecurity when there was worry that - for all sorts of reasons - some farmers and others might relax their vigilance. At the same time we were trying to get over the message that many restrictions on walkers were being lifted because of evidence that walkers pose minimal risk to spreading disease. It was suggested that these two approaches were inconsistent, but in fact both were based on clear veterinary and scientific advice and both messages were included on the video.

In question 3 you asked about the help available to farmers under Form D restrictions. The Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS) provides free on-farm business advice to farmers and growers in England. Farmers are entitled to 3 days of consultancy advice, which provides a business health check leading to the preparation of an Action Plan that will help farmers develop better business practices and signpost them to organisations that can provide further support and advice. The FBAS is run by the Small Business Service through their Business Link network and is delivered on the ground by experienced Farm Business Advisers.

An enhanced form of the service was introduced as part of the FMD recovery package to culled out farms. However, the core service continues to run and is open to all farmers including Form D farmers. To help ease waiting lists for the service, a transfer of funds was made from the FMD enhanced service to the core service in July and ring fenced for delivery to Form D farms only.

A further budget review, due to be completed this month, aims to maximise expenditure in this financial year for both services by reviewing demand and switching funding to match requirements.

As you will appreciate, farms under Form D restrictions are not eligible for help via the Business Recovery Fund (BRF), which was set up specifically to help non-farm rural businesses, as they had no other source of help. The BRF operates using the state aids rules’ exemption for de minimis grants, but currently the exemption does not extend to farming or transport.

The England Rural Development Programme and its rural economy schemes also provide a sound basis for contributing to the government’s medium term objectives for rural regeneration and diversification. Over the seven-year life of the Programme, the ERDP will provide a continued and increasing source of help to projects which will contribute to the creation of more diverse and competitive agricultural and forestry sectors, new jobs, development of new products and market outlets, and provide targeted training to support these new activities. It is not, however, a good vehicle for helping with immediate short term recovery since it is constrained by limited funds and the inflexible nature of the Programme which has to meet the strict requirements of the Rural Development Regulation.

In question 4 you asked about the lessons learned from the outbreak for the future of British farming and food production/ distribution. As indicated earlier, the Government has set up an independent Policy Commission to advise on how we create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector within a thriving rural economy, which advances environmental, health, and animal welfare goals. Chaired by Sir Don Curry, the Commission will have a key role in informing the Government’s approach to policy in the future within England.
The Policy Commission has been asked to report to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State by 31st December this year. The report will help to inform the Government's position when CAP reform proposals are published next year. Again, it would be premature for me to comment on the outcome of this study, but we would encourage your Council and anyone who has an interest in this crucial debate to send your comments to Sir Don Curry, Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, Rm. LG12, Admiralty Arch, The Mall, London, SW1A 2WH or by email to farming@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Finally, your **fifth question** asked about sustainable development and CAP reform. The Secretary of State has announced that DEFRA will prepare its own Sustainable Development Strategy. Work on this is now under way and external stakeholders will be involved in its preparation. In November we will be publishing information on both the DEFRA and Government Sustainable Development websites seeking further comments (www.defra.gov.uk and www.sustainable-development.gov.uk). The Strategy is likely to be an overall assessment of the Department’s potential contribution to sustainable development and identify particular priorities within that, rather than a comprehensive delivery plan.

I hope this is helpful. If you have further detailed questions, it would be helpful if these could be as specific and focused as possible in order to minimise the burdens for staff actively engaged in disease control operations.

I have replied to this correspondence myself because of our earlier useful contacts over the inquiry. From now on responsibility within the Department for co-ordinating evidence to inquiries will rest with my colleague Lord Whitty, to whom all future correspondence should be addressed.

We look forward to hearing about the findings of the Devon County Council Inquiry.
DEFRA’s Response to Supplementary Questions
(December 2001)

THE DEVON FOOT AND MOUTH INQUIRY

Thank you for your letter of 9 November passing on some further questions from the Chairman of Devon FMD Inquiry, Professor Mercer.

Several of these seek our views on general issues that have arisen from the recent outbreak or on future action that we might take. However, we expect that these matters will be considered by the two national Inquiries that have been established by the Government and to which Alun Michael referred in his letter of 23 October to your Chief Executive, Philip Jenkinson. While I am happy to reply fully to those questions that relate specifically to the present outbreak, I do not think that it would be right to pre-empt the results of the Inquiries.

The attached replies therefore answer Professor Mercer’s questions as far as possible but not where we expect the matter to be considered by the national Inquiries and where it would therefore be premature to reply until we have received their reports. Questions 2, 10 (as regards future policy), 11 and 12 fall into this category. The Inquiry reports are also likely to influence our future actions in respect of other issues such as communications and again reference is made to this in the relevant replies.

Finally, I am also attaching some material that we have prepared for the use of local authority inquiries. This is intended to provide some general information on various topics, which the Inquiry may wish to take into account. The information given is correct to the best of our knowledge and belief but it is not, and is not intended to be, a comprehensive account of what happened during the outbreak. Nor does it seek to draw any conclusions about the future, for which we await the reports of the national Inquiries. It is simply intended to be of assistance to your Inquiry although I appreciate that the Devon team may have already covered a lot of this ground.
The information should predominantly already be in the public domain although it has been grouped together here for convenience under the following headings:

- Contingency planning (including the role of the army)
- Slaughter policy
- Vaccination
- Communications/openness
- Local discretion
- Scientific advice on FMD
- Source of the outbreak
- Disposal issues
- Biosecurity
- Welfare of animals
- Compensation for the compulsory slaughter of livestock
- Cleansing and disinfection of premises
- Import controls
- Impact on agriculture
- Movement of animals
- Impact on the rural economy
- Access to the countryside

**LORD WHITTY**
(approved by the Minister and signed in his absence)
ANNEX TO LORD WHITTY’S LETTER

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS FROM THE DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL FMD INQUIRY

Q1. Can we see FMD contingency plan to which MAFF (DEFRA) were working during the current crisis to aid decision-making?

A. The FMD Contingency Plan can be found on the DEFRA website (http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/control/contingency/index.htm); a hard copy is attached. Risk simulation exercises were frequently carried out (84 between 1995 - 1999).

Q2. What precisely is being done to develop a new multi-agency national contingency plan to apply in the event of any future outbreak. How is it proposed to rehearse the plan regularly with the other agencies involved, including local authorities?

A. Contingency planning is being reviewed against the possibility of further cases of disease arising. However, in the longer term contingency planning is a matter that we expect to be considered by the national Inquiries and it would therefore be premature to reply fully until we have received their reports.

Q3. DEFRA is seeking to improve communications to farmers via local office staff. Many who submitted to our Inquiry considered that this was a weakness during the current crisis. Will improvements include the setting up of an integrated emergency call centre staffed by adequate numbers of experienced and well-informed personnel able to give farmers accurate, up-to-date and unambiguous information from the outset?

A. We have started to address this in the following ways:

• Communications Directorate in DEFRA is developing wide ranging contingency plans to deal with emergency situations such as further FMD outbreaks. Part of these plans could include rapidly putting in place emergency call centres, and having communications channels in place to ensure they have all relevant information.

• We are currently engaged in a quantitative research exercise to determine how best to communicate with the farming community. This will provide us with valuable information on how best to involve staff at a local level.

We will also be studying carefully the outcome of the national inquiries.

Q4. You mention stakeholder meetings in your response to our first questions; will County Councils be invited to them?

A. The Trading Standards Department of Devon County Council attended the weekly FMD stakeholders meeting in Devon. However, communications with stakeholders is likely to be a matter that is considered by the national Inquiries and we shall need to study carefully the outcome of the national inquiries.

Q5. Communications with media were not seen by those involved at the local level to be adequate to meet the demands required. While you say in your response that ‘you are continuously striving to improve public communications’, attendance at news briefings and copies of your daily information sheet were not available to some information spreading organisations such as the County Council. Will this be improved in any future outbreak or emergency and what are your proposals to ensure any future contingency plan contains an effective communications plan, which will spell out the process and accountabilities?

A. At local level we issued daily bulletins and summaries. In sending out these we always consulted with the local authority, in particular trading standards and animal health and environmental services.

Devon County Council press officers were invited to every press conference. They always received advance copies of Press Releases, newsletters and were welcome to attend at any time. Indeed, some press
conferences featured county council figures such as a trading standards or environmental health official.

Devon County Council often called their own press conferences and we were invited. Whenever we could and whenever asked we always shared what information we had.

There are lessons to be learned, and we are already putting steps in place to improve communications. At local level we will be meeting councils and other services see how we can improve emergency communications for the future.

We will also be studying carefully the outcome of the national inquiries on this matter.

Q6. What steps are being taken to improve the Department and Government’s database of local government contacts? The LGA’s report on the 2001 outbreak highlighted the disappointing communications between local government and the then MAFF and the fact that central Government did not appear to have the necessary database to e-mail local authority chief executives directly.

A. Communications with local authorities are very important for DEFRA. Communications to all local authorities are sent via the relevant local authority association, e.g. the LGA and LACOTS, which have clear lines of communications with all their member authorities. We will also be studying carefully the outcome of the national inquiries on communications with local authorities.

Q7. In his report “Rural Recovery after Foot and Mouth Disease”, Lord Haskins makes the point that those farmers who have not lost their stock, but are unable to move them for sale or to other grassland, have probably suffered more economically than those farmers whose livestock were slaughtered. He recommends “special compensation” for these farmers. It is clear from his report that he means over-and-above action already taken by Government. He also warns of the serious welfare problems that arise with these “locked up” herds when the grass runs out. Up to 4,500 Devon farmers have been in this situation. What action is the Government taking to provide retrospective financial support to help these farms recover? What action is being taken to assist farms still in this situation and avert animal welfare problems?

A. Alun Michael recently responded formally to Lord Haskins’ report (in England’s Rural Future) and a copy is enclosed herewith. It is not Government policy to provide compensation for consequential losses arising from the FMD outbreak. As regards the impact on animal welfare of movement restrictions, the key here is to lift the restrictions as soon as is practicable and considerable progress has been made, for instance by Devon becoming a free county on 27 November. Where restrictions still apply and the provision of fodder is a problem, some charities offer assistance. For example, the Arthur Rank Centre’s Addington Fund has a National Fodder Bureau to broker the supply of fodder and to assist those in financial need with the cost as well as the associated haulage costs. The Government is providing support to such charities in the form of match funding, and recently announced an extension of the match-funding scheme to run from September to the end of the year. Finally, where welfare problems cannot be resolved, the Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme provides a further option.

Q8. Why did the then Ministry commence work on the Ash Moor project (reportedly costing £7 million) without undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment or prior consultation with the County Council? What plans are there for the future of the Ash Moor burial site? If it is to be used for its original purpose, will it be a national resource or a purely local one? And if it is to be a national asset will you be submitting an entirely fresh NOPD (Notification of Proposed Development) as is required in those circumstances?

A. Work was commenced on the preparation of the Ash Moor mass burial site in Devon in response to the intense local need to dispose of animal carcasses during the height of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. The disease had significantly affected Devon and preferred means of disposal of carcasses were predicted to be insufficient.

On 30 March DEFRA’s Exeter Office set out the factors leading to the decision to use Ash Moor as a burial
site. The Environment Agency carried out an initial risk assessment of the site on 11 April. Construction of the first cell commenced on 20 April. On 24 April 2001 a letter from Devon County Council to the then MAFF conveyed consent for the development of the site under Circular 18/84: ‘Crown Land and Crown Development.

Halcrow Group Limited have carried out retrospectively a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment on behalf of DEFRA as sponsors of the project. The Assessment was carried out during August and September 2001 and the draft report is currently subject to consultation.

On 14 May 2001, in the light of the incidence of the disease, DEFRA instructed that work should cease on the Ash Moor site. The site was effectively mothballed and has remained in its present state of maintenance against possible future operational use. To date no carcasses have been disposed of at the site and there are no current plans to use the Ash Moor site for the disposal of animal carcasses.

The present position with regard to the Ash Moor site as with other sites, is that it has been mothballed until there is a firm and agreed policy on procedures to deal with recrudescence or any new outbreak of disease. DEFRA officials will be meeting Devon County Council in the New Year to discuss the future of the site.

Q9. The Inquiry heard evidence that a family living adjacent to the Ash Moor burial pit was given less than 24 hours notice before work was due to start and then advised by an MoD official to move. Does the Department accept that the way the news was broken to the family concerned was badly handled and what steps would it now take to ensure more sensitive consultation? Is the Department prepared to apologise to the family for the way they were treated? This would go a long way in addressing the emotional burden placed on and still being felt by this family.

A. Although it would not be appropriate to comment on an individual case, DEFRA regrets any distress that may have been caused to the family concerned.

Q10. Does the Minister now consider, in the light of experience, that vaccination as a means of ‘ring-fencing’ an outbreak, could reduce the number of livestock culled, or at least reconcile the rate of slaughter with the rate of disposal?

A. There has never been a disagreement that ring-vaccination could be a useful disease control measure providing the right circumstances prevail. Ring vaccination was not a practical measure at the start of our outbreak since it was soon clear that the virus had potentially been spread across a wide area and many animals. According to some independent studies using ring vaccination at that time could have made the situation worse if this had been the principal control mechanism.

Q11. Given that vaccination is used routinely in this country to tackle other livestock diseases and that the meat from such livestock is subsequently sold by supermarkets without comment, would the Department agree that there is no justifiable reason in commercial terms why Foot and Mouth vaccinated livestock could not be treated in the same way?

A. This is not strictly a like for like comparison. Again, the EU single market has implications for any consideration of a change of policy. This is why the UK was co-organiser of an international conference on FMD, which was held in Brussels on 12/13 December. One of the strong messages emerging from that conference was the urgent need for international verification of a test which can distinguish between vaccinated and unvaccinated animals. This is also a matter that we expect to be considered by the national Inquiries. It would therefore be premature to come to a conclusion until we have received their reports but it would be wrong to suggest the food industry do not have concerns about a foot and mouth vaccination policy. Some of this concern stems from the fact that under EU rules products from animals vaccinated against foot and mouth disease would have to be handled and treated separately to products from animals that have not been so vaccinated.
Q12. The Inquiry heard evidence that the policy of contiguous culling was flawed because it was guided by a database of individual holding numbers, which might bear no relation to actual proximity of livestock on the ground. As a result livestock were slaughtered considerable distances from an infected premises or were clearly separated by a physical barrier such as woodland or a road. Why wasn’t more done to cross-check centrally-held information with local knowledge of holdings? Why wasn’t more discretion given to Ministry staff and vets to ensure policy decisions were interpreted sensibly on the ground. Does the Department now agree that this fundamental flaw in MAFF’s knowledge led to the needless slaughter of healthy livestock with the consequent additional pressures on an overloaded disposal system? Can the Department explain what steps have been taken to ensure these mistakes are not repeated during a re-occurrence of the disease both this winter and in the longer term?

A. It should be noted that the policy was not applied indiscriminately or without consideration of local conditions, as this question implies. The contiguous premises cull was an approach based on a general scientific and veterinary judgement, with provision for proportionate exceptions at local level based on local veterinary judgement.

The contiguous premises policy when introduced in late March was based on veterinary and epidemiological advice given to DEFRA by its experts, that in all the circumstances of this FMD outbreak animals on premises contiguous to IPs were exposed to disease. However, where a farmer asserted that his animals had not been exposed, a re-assessment was performed by local vets to determine whether or not there were any factors which demonstrated that exposure had not in fact occurred. If for any of a number of reasons exposed cattle or pigs on a CP had not been culled within 21 days of the confirmation of disease on the relevant IP, those animals on that CP were exempted from slaughter if they showed no clinical signs of disease.

The CP slaughter policy was further refined at the end of April, by extending the scope for local veterinary judgement:

- Cattle could be spared if there was adequate biosecurity (but not if they had grazed within 50 metres of an IP boundary since 1 February).
- A strictly limited exemption for rare breed sheep, was introduced if they could be isolated from other stock and strict biosecurity was imposed.

The previous exemption for cattle and pigs if no clinical signs had appeared for 21 days after the relevant IP was retained.

Independent studies have demonstrated that without the culling policy adopted, the outbreak would have been far worse and, indeed, cases could still be occurring now. Practical experience of controlling the disease outbreak in the Brecon Beacons demonstrated that disease was not brought under control until contiguous culling was implemented.

In the longer term, this is a matter that we expect to be considered by the national Inquiries and we will wish to take account of their reports.

Q13. The Inquiry heard evidence from a vet suggesting that the Foot and Mouth outbreak in the Knowstone area was caused by windblown particles of unburnt animal tissue drifting from a pyre. Has the Department any evidence of Foot and Mouth being spread in this way? Does the Department accept unburnt animal tissue carries a potential risk of contamination? Does the Department accept the potential for unburnt animal tissue to be carried by the wind from a pyre site? What guidelines are pyre operators expected to follow to ensure carcasses are properly disposed of and contamination risks are eliminated?

A. DEFRA field epidemiologists have completed the review of the infected premises in the area around Knowstone. This is to ensure that epidemiological links between IPs have not been missed and to collate the epidemiological information for defined clusters.

Having done this there is only one IP in Witheridge, which is about 8km south of Knowstone, which has a theoretical epidemiological link to a funeral pyre on the basis of its proximity and timing, in terms of the
date of the pyre and the estimated date the IP became infected. There was no evidence of debris from the pyre merely the above link and the farm could have been infected by other means.

The Meteorological Office has used information on the location and dates of some of the pyres in Devon for an analysis of possible airborne spread. This has not revealed any evidence that pyres had resulted in infection downwind of these pyres.

DEFRA is responsible for such disposal operations which are carried out in such a way so as to prevent any further spread of disease from unburnt animal tissue.

Q14. The widely publicised images of burning pyres and the associated concerns about public health did great damage to Devon’s national and international tourism business. Does the Ministry agree that in future pyres should be used only as a last resort and in any case, be of single small farm scale?

A. At the beginning of the outbreak, disposal took account of the Northumberland report, which recommended burial or, where this was not possible, burning on a pyre. On strictly veterinary grounds it is more appropriate to destroy and dispose of carcasses on farm rather than taking potentially contaminated material off the farm. However, agreement was subsequently reached between DEFRA and the various interested Government Departments and agencies on 24 April on a hierarchy of disposal. This is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of animals</th>
<th>Rendering</th>
<th>Incineration</th>
<th>Landfill</th>
<th>Burn</th>
<th>Bury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All (essential for cattle born before 1 August 1996)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Cattle born after 1 August 1996, sheep and pigs</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Cattle born after August 1996, sheep and pigs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of disposal policy in future outbreaks, this is a matter that we expect to be considered by the national Inquiries and we will need to study carefully the outcome on this matter.

Q15. The Inquiry also heard evidence from Knowstone Parish Council that the culling operation at the village was bungled, a herd of cows was shot on the run and that it took several days to complete the slaughter. The Parish Council expressed dismay that the Ministry did not act within the law and used an excessive Police support to enforce its decisions. Does the Department accept the Parish Council’s criticisms and does the Department agree that the insensitive handling of this cull did nothing to foster a united front against Foot and Mouth? Has the Department conducted an investigation into the conduct of the Knowstone cull either wholly or in partnership with other agencies? What steps has the Department undertaken to ensure that all future culls are conducted efficiently and with sensitivity?

A. DEFRA very much regrets the conduct of this particular cull. Cattle handling facilities were limited and twenty-four yearling Limousins, which were not used to humans, managed to escape. Re-gathering them would have been likely to result in the animals running further away from the farm potentially spreading disease over a wide area. The decision was therefore made to cull them using marksmen. Regrettably the marksman selected was only able to cull 6 and only succeeded in dispersing the remaining animals further. An expert stalker eventually completed the task. New instructions have been issued nationally to ensure that sufficiently skilled marksmen are selected in future.

Q16. To assist in the recovery and revival of the Devon economy it would help if Government spending on tourism promotion in England matched that for Scotland and Wales. Will the Ministry press for this level playing field and in particular repeat and reinforce the Department of Culture Media and Sport Select Committee recommendation that “It will be essential to promote areas most adversely affected by the current crisis with public funding”? 

A. The Department for Culture Media and Sport published the Government response to the fourth report from the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, Commons Session 2000-2001 on 17 October 2001 (Cmnd 5279). A detailed response to the issue raised can be found at pages 4-6 of the document.

Q17. *Will there be funding for the voluntary and religious psychological support when they are deployed during crisis times?*

A. Although the Government cannot commit to open ended funding of these sectors, it can play a significant role in promoting voluntary and community activity in all parts of society. This commitment is clearly set out in the Compact between Government and the voluntary and community sector in England.

The Government recognises the important role that the voluntary and religious sector plays in supporting rural communities during times of crisis. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Health are working closely in partnership with these sectors through the Rural Stress Action Plan (RSAP). DEFRA has in total made available close to £1 million to the RSAP group as well as providing temporary accommodation. This valuable partnership forms part of an essential support network for those in distress in rural areas. We hope to continue building on this good working relationship.

The Government has also funded the Rural Stress Information Network (RSIN) to establish a network of support available to people in rural communities who are suffering from stress. The network includes professional health care staff and voluntary organisations with relevant expertise (Samaritans, MIND etc) together with legal, financial and business support.

The Government is also providing support to such charities the Arthur Rank Centre's Addington Fund in the form of match funding, and recently announced an extension of the match-funding scheme to run from September to the end of the year. The Fund gives support to farmers in need who have increased costs due to FMD. In addition to this, the Addington Fund now also provides one-off support payments to non-agricultural rural businesses where FMD has an impact.
DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD): CONTINGENCY PLANNING

• Before the outbreak there was a contingency plan for FMD (and other animal diseases). A Great Britain contingency plan was submitted to the EU in 1993 and has been up-dated as necessary since then. However, it is accepted that this contingency plan was largely internal - essentially for officials and vets. In addition, eighty-four risk simulation exercises were carried out between 1995 - 1999.

• It has to be recognised that the size and scale of the outbreak was unprecedented. Accordingly the outbreak exceeded the ability of the resources available under the contingency plans to deal with it effectively.

Steps were taken as follows:

• Rapid steps were taken to recruit non-SVS vets in the UK and abroad. At the end of the first week of the outbreak (25 February), 421 veterinary staff were deployed. This rose to a peak of about 1800 in mid-May.

• On the day that the first case was confirmed (20 February), the office of the Minister of State (Lords) in MAFF contacted the office of the Minister for the Armed Forces to warn of the possibility of future requests for military assistance.

• On 14 March, a Director of Operations was appointed in London. On 19 March Regional Operations Directors were appointed for Cumbria and Devon (and at later dates to other centres).

• Around 20 March, ADAS, an organisation with close associations with livestock farmers, were recruited to provide additional support to undertake the proposed vaccination programme for North Cumbria and possibly Devon had that gone ahead. Commercial supplies of the relevant vaccine have also been built up as a precautionary measure.

• On 14 March, military vets were deployed to support MAFF. On 15 March, a military logistics team was deployed to the MAFF Headquarters in London. On 19 March, the military was deployed in Devon and the next day in Cumbria (and other regions thereafter).

• On 26 March, a Joint Co-ordination Centre was established in London jointly by the army and MAFF. Local army Headquarters were established in Exeter, Worcester, Carlisle and Dumfries with military liaison officers appointed to other Regions. The role of these Headquarters was to co-ordinate logistics and other support to MAFF and then DEFRA, drawn from appropriate civil and military resources. Teams of armed forces personnel also helped to co-ordinate the administration of slaughter and the transport and disposal of carcasses in affected areas. The armed forces contribution to the operation was directed by Land Command under Commander-in-Chief Land. Over 2000 forces personnel were deployed by 15 April but thereafter the number reduced. However, the army remained available for deployment (as in the Hexham outbreak after 24 August).

• Currently DEFRA is fully ready and equipped to deal with any new FMD cases, should any further cases arise in the current outbreak.

• For the future, a revised contingency plan will be more inclusive, building on the newly forged links between DEFRA and its stakeholders at both national and local level and will be informed by the outcome of the Lessons Learned inquiry.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD): SLAUGHTER POLICY

Government priority has been to eradicate FMD as quickly as possible.

To achieve this, the policy is as follows:

• Cull all susceptible animals on confirmed infected farms within 24 hours of the first report of the disease by the farmer.

• Cull all susceptible livestock on farms neighbouring an infected farm (contiguous premises) within 48 hours of the first report other than in the cases described below. It is necessary to cull animals exposed to disease even if they are not showing signs of disease. By the time signs develop the animals would have been breathing out the virus for several days, and dairy cows will have been excreting virus in their milk, running a high risk of spreading the disease further.

• Cull all animals on farms that are considered to be dangerous contacts i.e. where there is a close link to a confirmed case due to for example movement of animals, people, vehicles or equipment.

• Slaughter on suspicion animals that can not be clinically diagnosed but which are suspected on veterinary grounds to be infected. In these cases a full set of diagnostic samples as well as a statistical bleed of any sheep present is taken. Contiguous premises are not immediately culled. If the laboratory results confirm the disease the case becomes confirmed and the contiguous premises are culled.

This policy has applied since the first case of disease (although the contiguous premises policy was not introduced until the end of March). In addition, the Minister announced on 15 March that pigs and sheep within 3 km of infected premises in Cumbria and Dumfries and Galloway would also be subject to culling on the grounds that they had been exposed to infection. The cull was completed in Dumfries and Galloway and replaced by serological testing in Cumbria on 24 May.
The contiguous premises policy when introduced in late March was based on veterinary and epidemiological advice given to DEFRA by its experts, that in all the circumstances of this FMD outbreak animals on premises contiguous to IPs were exposed to disease. However where a farmer asserted that his animals had not been exposed, a re-assessment was performed by local vets to determine whether or not there were any factors which demonstrated that exposure had not in fact occurred. If for any of a number of reasons (e.g. farmer resistance) exposed cattle or pigs on a CP had not been culled within 21 days of the confirmation of disease on the relevant IP, those animals on that CP were exempted from slaughter if they showed no clinical signs of disease.

The contiguous premises slaughter policy was further refined at the end of April, by extending the scope for local veterinary judgement:

- Cattle could be spared if there was adequate biosecurity (but not if they had grazed within 50 metres of an IP boundary since 1 February).
- A strictly limited exemption for rare breed and hefted sheep, was introduced if they could be isolated from other stock and strict biosecurity was imposed.

The previous exemption for cattle and pigs if no clinical signs had appeared for 21 days after the relevant IP was retained.

In July, an exemption policy for rare breeds of pigs and for small camelids was introduced providing strict biosecurity measures were met.

In terms of the overall slaughter policy, it should be noted that:

- Scientific advice is that the policy of culling susceptible animals on contiguous farms was vital to get ahead of the infection by removing animals that were already potentially incubating the FMD virus. This advice was informed by four different epidemiological models.
- However, it was not always possible to meet the target of slaughtering susceptible animals on contiguous premises within 48 hours of the first report. Sometimes this was due to lack of resources in a particular area, or physical access difficulties. Some delays also due to farmer resistance or legal challenge. Epidemiological data suggests that such delays did extend the outbreak. The proposed Animal Health (Amendment) Bill will lessen delays due to inappropriate action by farmers.
- All farmers are paid full market value as compensation for any animals slaughtered as a result of the FMD outbreak.
- Everyone engaged in the slaughter and killing process must have the knowledge and skill necessary to perform the tasks humanely and efficiently in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995. Where members of the armed forces were involved in the foot and mouth cull they were trained beforehand. Outside slaughterhouses, Veterinary Officers of the State Veterinary Service enforce the legislation.

**DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD): VACCINATION**

- The Government’s primary objective has been to eradicate Foot and Mouth Disease.
- Vaccination would be used if it were clear that it was the most appropriate measure to shorten the outbreak.
- Where vaccination is used we would want to ensure that disease would not continue to circulate. Vaccination does not provide complete protection and can mask infection.

It should be noted that:

- Contingency plans for emergency vaccination existed prior to the outbreak. They reflected requirements of European legislation (Council Directive 85/511) that vaccination against FMD has been prohibited since 1992. Emergency vaccination is permitted when an outbreak threatens to become extensive subject to the vaccination plans being submitted for scrutiny and approval by the European Commission and other Member States.
- European rules for emergency vaccination also cover requirements to (i) prohibit the movement of vaccinated animals from the vaccination zone for a period of at least 12 months (unless the animals are to be culled); (ii) keep products from vaccinated animals separate from products from non-vaccinated animals until heat or other prescribed treatments have been undertaken; and (iii) prescribe the treatments.
- Throughout the outbreak, the Government have kept vaccination actively under review. Vaccination would be used if scientific advice were clear that it was the most appropriate measure to shorten the outbreak. But vaccination on its own could never have eradicated FMD entirely.
- Ring vaccination can be used with or without culling around an infected farm or area. However, the ring would have to be very large to catch all secondary cases, some of which have appeared in this outbreak more than 10 km from the source. This strategy was not used at the start of the outbreak because it was too late by the time FMD was identified in the UK. A large number of movements had taken place before the first case of FMD was identified and therefore the virus had potentially been spread across a very wide area, making ring vaccination impractical. Furthermore, however much care is taken, ring vaccination may not be completely effective in containing infection within an infected area.
• Ring vaccination was considered for clusters of new cases that occurred later in the outbreak, e.g. Hexham. In these cases the Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Veterinary Officer advised that tighter biosecurity measures and culling would be the most effective and fastest measures to eradicate the disease in those areas.

• Pre-emptive vaccination of pigs was also considered when the Thirsk cluster of cases posed a renewed threat to the major pig production areas of the country. The risk and cost/benefit analysis did not support the case for vaccination, not least because of the post-vaccination requirements to de-bone and mature meat (<pH 6) which is difficult to achieve for pork.

• The Government's scientific and veterinary advisers have recommended limited use of vaccination only during this outbreak. It was clear that the vaccination plan for cattle in part of Cumbria did not have local support (from farmers, retailers and consumers). Without co-operation from farmers, it would not have been possible to implement quickly enough to be effective. There was only a very limited window of opportunity when vaccination was an option - i.e. before cattle were turned out.

• Vaccination of rare breeds was considered by scientific and veterinary advisers at the appropriate time but was not recommended. Other measures to protect rare breeds of sheep were announced on 26 April and, in July, for rare breeds of pigs and for small camelids.

• Current scientific and veterinary advice is that vaccination would not help in the present disease situation.

• The use of vaccination in the Netherlands earlier this year did not save animals’ lives. In fact for each case more animals were killed than would have been under the UK’s contiguous cull policy (10,000 animals per case in the Netherlands compared to 2000 per case in the UK). All vaccinated animals were killed and destroyed as required by the EU Decision that permitted the Dutch vaccination programme.

• The Government recognised early in the outbreak that future EU and international policies for handling FMD would need to be reassessed, including the role of vaccination. The UK, with the Dutch, took the initiative to organise a conference that takes place in December 2001. Topics will include the possible future use of vaccination.

• All livestock farmers were sent a leaflet in April about vaccination, including the Government’s responses to over 50 questions posed by the NFU. Information about the use of vaccination has also been placed on the DEFRA FMD website and kept up to date (www.defra.gsi.gov.uk/footandmouth/vaccination).

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
COMMUNICATIONS/OPENNESS
Means of communication used were as follows:

• A dedicated FMD website updated continuously during the day, providing news, advice and facts relating to the disease and farm operations as affected by the disease

• Regular press conferences and specialist press briefings

• Regular stakeholder meetings at HQ (in London) and at regional level

• Telephone helplines (general DEFRA helpline, FMD helpline, animal movements helpline, LACOTS helpline, local office numbers)

• Letters to farmers on: biosecurity (March, 2 in April, May, July), vaccination (April) and autumn movements (letters from Lord Whitty to farmers and to LACOTS).

• Leaflets on FMD.

• A video on biosecurity sent to all farmers in July.

• Regional communications e.g. Devon newsletter.

• FMD update sent to farmers in August.

• Central media briefing (by NCC and latterly DEFRA Briefing Unit)

• Advice on access to the countryside.

Communications were made as open as possible. In particular:

• The website includes a full list of Infected Places where FMD has been confirmed. Disclosure of this information is deemed to be necessary for the purposes of disease control and therefore in the public interest and allowed under the Data Protection Act.

• A set of veterinary risk assessments, which underlie FMD control policies being applied, has been placed in the public domain.

• Emerging policies have been discussed wherever possible with the stakeholder community.
DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
LOCAL DISCRETION

**Diagnosis of disease**
- It is standard practice in a disease-free country to confirm foot and mouth disease using laboratory tests and this is required by Council Directive 85/511/EEC.
- The animals in the first outbreak reported were put under movement restrictions immediately on suspicion of infection, and the Institute for Animal Health (IAH) at Pirbright confirmed the diagnosis the following day. The IAH carried out an ELISA test; which takes about five to six hours to complete.
- As the outbreak progressed, DEFRA moved quickly to a position whereby a greater proportion of cases were diagnosed on clinical signs. The policy is now to slaughter immediately on clinical diagnosis or suspicion of disease.
- If the vet on the farm makes a clear clinical diagnosis of FMD and has evidence to support it, then disease will be confirmed. The case is then included in the day’s confirmed new cases figure.
- The normal practice is that the clinical diagnosis is phoned through to Head Office in London and authorisation to slaughter stock is then given during the same telephone call. However, the SVS were advised on 27 March 2001 that the inspecting veterinary surgeon could authorise slaughter immediately to ensure the slaughter process was not delayed if any problem in communicating with Head Office occurred.

**Disease control**
- EU Council Directive 85/511/EEC introducing Community measures for the control of FMD lays down obligatory procedures in terms of reporting and controlling disease (a draft Directive is due to come forward for discussion in the EU Council of Ministers which will take account of the new and changing situation since the original Directive was produced in the 1980s).
- Subject to the EU requirements, policy for disease control is set nationally on the best overall veterinary and scientific advice. It is important to ensure that policy is applied rigorously in all areas.
- Disease control is the responsibility of local Disease Control Centres.
- Local discretion is exercised wherever necessary, e.g. in decisions on slaughter on contiguous premises.
- Local pilot exercises have been carried out, e.g. a study to help farmers assess and deal with the risk of turning out cattle to pasture from their winter quarters took place in parts of Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire. The results from the exercise were be used to arrive at an assessment of the risks of spread of disease from turning out cattle or from movement of sheep in specific areas.

**Operations**
- The FMD contingency plan assumed that operations would be carried out regionally under central guidelines.
- Senior officials were appointed to be Regional Operations Directors from 19 March. They were responsible for liaising with local stakeholders.
- The Joint Co-ordination Centre in London acts as focus for Regional Operations Directors receives regular reports and disseminates information and guidance nationally.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
SCIENTIFIC ADVICE
- The Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), Professor David King, is responsible to the Prime Minister and members of the UK Cabinet for ensuring that the Government has access to the best possible scientific advice on which to base its policy decisions.
- On 24 March the Prime Minister asked the CSA to establish a group of scientific experts to advise on the FMD epidemic.
- The FMD science group was not set up to be a consensus forming body. It was constitute so as to include a range of views on the scientific aspects of tackling the outbreak. Its purpose is to help the CSA decide on and formulate advice to Government by means of discussion and debate.
- The core of the group was formed of four teams of epidemiologists. Three from universities (Imperial College, Cambridge and Edinburgh) and the MAFF/Veterinary Laboratories Agency team.
- Veterinary practitioners, animal health experts, logisticians and other disciplines also participated in the work of the group which met daily for the first few weeks and has now held over thirty meetings.
- The four independent epidemiological models provided a means of exploring alternative strategies (including the use of...
vaccination) for bringing the epidemic under control. These showed that speeding up the culling of animals on infected premises (to 24 hrs) and culling of animals on contiguous premises (within 48 hrs) was the best option.

• The group has considered a number of other scientific issues including vaccination, diagnostic testing and biosecurity.

• Many of those who participated in the work of the group have published papers on the science of the epidemic in peer reviewed journals. In addition, the CSA has given numerous media briefings and has written an article (published in the Daily Telegraph of 21 September) on the scientific issues relating to FMD vaccination.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
SOURCE OF THE OUTBREAK

• A great deal of epidemiological research has been conducted into the origins of this outbreak.

• The current epidemic has been caused by a specific strain of the foot and mouth virus (PanAsian Strain O) which has occurred in a number of countries around the world.

• The precise means of introduction of the virus is unknown and subject to continuing investigations. It may have been introduced in illegally imported meat or meat products. It would not be appropriate to comment further on the specific question of the source or sources of the outbreak until all investigations are complete.

• The earliest case of FMD identified to date occurred at a holding in Heddon-on-the-Wall (case number 2001/04). Pigs from this holding were sent to an abattoir in Essex where the first identified case of FMD was confirmed on 20 February.

• During the period of infectivity before FMD was confirmed on IP FMD 2001/04, windborne spread of virus had infected cattle and sheep on nearby farms in Northumberland.

• Subsequent spread of the disease was mainly through movement of animals, particularly sheep.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
DISPOSAL ISSUES

• Nearly 4 million animals have been destroyed in the current outbreak for disease control purposes. This has presented a major problem in respect of disposal both in terms of logistics, particularly when very large numbers of animals were being killed at the height of the outbreak, and the means of disposal.

• At the outset, disposal took account of the Northumberland report, which recommended burial or, where this was not possible, burning on a pyre. On strictly veterinary grounds it is more appropriate to destroy and dispose of carcasses on farm rather than taking potentially contaminated material off the farm. The contingency plan was therefore based on on-farm disposal routes.

• Agreement was subsequently reached between DEFRA and the various interested Government Departments and agencies on 24 April on a hierarchy of disposal. This is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of animals</th>
<th>Rendering</th>
<th>Incineration</th>
<th>Landfill</th>
<th>Burn</th>
<th>Bury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>All (essential for cattle born before 1 August 1996)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Cattle born after 1 August 1996, sheep and pigs</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Cattle born after August 1996, sheep and pigs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Rendering, the preferred disposal route, was used from an early date. However, this required adequate biosecurity arrangements to be put in place at the rendering plants to ensure that virus would not be spread by water or air borne routes. It was also necessary to ensure that the lorries carrying carcasses to rendering were leak proof (checked by using dye to ensure that there was no leakage from lorries). After the protocols for loading lorries and leak testing certification as well as operational procedures for rendering plants and emergency procedures during transport had been put in place, the first rendering plant dedicated to FMD disposal came on stream on 9 March with further capacity added as it became available.). Due to the overall shortfall of rendering capacity, and the need to retain some rendering capacity for dealing with slaughterhouse wastes, other means of disposal were used widely in the earlier stages of the outbreak. However, rendering was usually the sole means of disposal when the daily number of confirmed cases dropped to 5 or below (which became the general rule from mid-June).

• However, given the need to urgently dispose of large numbers of carcasses, the other means of disposal were heavily used.

• Where carcasses have been burnt, wherever possible ash from the pyres is being buried on site but in some cases ground conditions rule this option out. Ash that cannot be buried is being transported to Calvert and a number of
other landfill sites. These sites are all well engineered facilities that have been purpose-designed to minimise any risks to the environment and human health. Sites are subject to site specific risk assessments and continuous monitoring.

- The Food Standards Agency is conducting a study into dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls in foods from farms close to pyres. To date, three reports on this study have been published. In the latest report, the Agency considers that the available results show that pyres have posed no additional risk to health through the food supply and, although a few results remain to be reported, they do not expect them to change the situation.

- Burial on farms was also used where the Environment Agency gave the necessary approvals, i.e. groundwater authorisations following site specific risk assessments.

- Mass burial sites were created in certain locations to cope with the needs. Such sites were established and used at Birkshaw Forest, Lockerbie; Great Orton, Cumbria; Throckmorton, Worcestershire; and Tow Law, Durham. These sites are not being used at present. A further site at Widdrington, Northumberland was used and is now closed and a site was prepared at Ash Moor, Devon but there are no current plans to use it.

- Mass burial sites were last used for three days at the beginning of September and previously not since 11 July.

- Movements of carcasses to sites other than the farm of origin for disposal were carried out in accordance with a published veterinary risk assessment.

- A further 2.5 million animals have been killed mainly in abattoirs under the Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme. These have been disposed of by rendering or to licensed landfill.

**DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD): BIOSECURITY**

- The Government’s top priority is to beat the disease. To this end, tight biosecurity is essential: especially by farmers and others who work in close contact with animals and are far more likely than others to have been in contact with FMD without knowing it.

- There is no room for complacency. Everyone must play their part in the fight against FMD.

- Advice on biosecurity has been provided to all those involved since the first outbreak of the disease. MAFF/DEFRA sent Factsheets to all livestock farmers in March, April and May. Advice was also provided to hauliers, and to the general public visiting the countryside.

- The importance of good biosecurity was emphasised by the production of a video on biosecurity in July. This was sent to all livestock farmers and could also be seen on the DEFRA website. Areas with significant disease targeted with visits from ministers, senior vets and representatives from the Chief Scientists Group. Publicity campaign includes advertisements in farming and local press, targeting particularly areas, which may be at risk of FMD spread.

- Hotspots of disease in North Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland have been contained by imposing Restricted Infected Area - “blue box” restrictions - a tight clampdown on the biosecurity of premises and vehicles around a designated area together with a ban on almost all animal movements except those direct to slaughter.

- Sheep shearing and dipping were identified by Veterinary Risk Assessments as activities that carried significant risks of transmitting FMD. Licensing schemes were introduced in June to minimise the risks. A recent Veterinary Risk Assessment identified sheep scanning as a risk and that is also now a licensed activity.

**DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD): WELFARE OF ANIMALS**

- The Government is committed to high animal welfare standards.

- FMD seriously compromises the welfare of affected animals.

- Elliott Morley established a special Consultative Group of animal welfare bodies for FMD to ensure that animal welfare concerns could be fast-tracked.

- All animals culled during the current FMD outbreak were required to be killed in accordance with the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 (WASK). Veterinary officers of the State Veterinary Service enforce these regulations outside slaughterhouses. With the growing scale of the culling operation, further detailed instructions were issued on 27 March to all those involved in the cull emphasising their responsibilities under WASK to ensure that all animals were dealt with humanely. To the best of DEFRA’s knowledge the vast majority of animals were dealt with humanely and in compliance with WASK. The few cases brought to DEFRA’s attention where it was alleged that animals had not been dealt with humanely have been investigated and appropriate action taken.

- On 6 March, MAFF issued advisory leaflets on cattle, sheep and goats and pigs for farmers concerned about animal welfare problems during the outbreak. Local fact sheets were produced on hill sheep and turning out cattle.

- Inability to move animals can lead to a reduction in welfare standards due to lack of fodder, care, shelter or overcrowding. A balance has to be struck between the risk of spreading FMD and welfare benefits of movement. In this
regard, the following measures were taken:

• From 8 March, grazing was allowed on land set aside under the Arable Area Payments Scheme where livestock could not be moved due to FMD restrictions. The grazing of eligible crops during the establishment stage was also allowed.

• On 9 March, arrangements were introduced to allow movements of animals under licence on welfare grounds across roads on the same holding and between local holdings under the same ownership subject to certain restrictions and conditions.

• On 19 March, arrangements were introduced for movements of animals under licence over longer distances, also subject to restrictions and conditions.

• On 22 March, the Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme was opened to maintain high standards of welfare on premises under FMD restrictions. The Scheme provides, where there is an existing problem or one likely to arise within four weeks which is confirmed by a private veterinary surgeon, for the removal and disposal of animals for which the Government will bear the cost and a payment is made for eligible animals. The Scheme was specifically extended to light lambs in September and October.

• From 11 May, licensed movements of cattle, sheep and goats to common grazings were allowed. Licensing arrangements were subsequently put in place to allow the dipping and shearing of sheep.

• From 23 May, movements of animals from premises under Form D restrictions were allowed.

• From 21 June, animals could be moved for veterinary treatment and emergency special needs under Animal Treatment Licenses.

• From 5 July, cattle, sheep and goats could be moved from open hills and moors for shearing or other essential husbandry purposes.

• Subsequent changes were made to facilitate the issue of licences and to extend the types of movement allowed. Finally, a new system of licensing movements by local authorities was introduced from 17 September for FMD free counties; 24 September for animals other than sheep in at risk or higher risk counties and on 1 October for sheep in at risk and higher risk counties. A new sole occupancy licence was introduced on 6 October for movements between holdings under sole occupation within a 10km radius. These movements can be for either welfare or commercial reasons.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):

COMPENSATION FOR THE COMPULSORY SLAUGHTER OF LIVESTOCK

• All farmers are paid market value as compensation for any animals slaughtered for FMD disease control purposes and over £1 billion has been paid to farmers so far in this outbreak. In addition compensation is paid for any feedingstuffs or any other materials destroyed or seized as being contaminated, which cannot be satisfactorily disinfected.

• The Department appoints a qualified independent valuer to advise on valuation. However, the owner of the animals may, within 14 days of receiving the valuation, give notice that he disputes the valuation. In these circumstances, the matter may be referred to an arbitrator appointed jointly by the owner and DEFRA or by an arbitrator appointed by the President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

• To speed up the valuation process (and hence the speed with which animals were killed), a change was made to the valuation procedure to allow owners of animals to be slaughtered to receive a standard valuation in respect of each animal with an option to elect for market valuation. This facility was made available on 22 March and was withdrawn from 30 July.

• The Animal Health (Amendment) Bill which is now before Parliament will adjust the arrangements for compensation for animals from farms which are infected with the disease. 75% of the value of the animals before they became infected will be payable, with the remaining 25% subject to an assessment of whether the farmer has acted in ways which put his stock at risk or which risk spreading the disease.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):

CLEANSING AND DISINFECTION (C AND D) OF PREMISES

• All premises where animals have been slaughtered for disease control purposes are required to have completed preliminary disinfection as soon as practicable after the slaughter and disposal of the carcasses. DEFRA bears the cost of this preliminary disinfection.

• Before premises can be restocked with animals, they are required to undergo secondary cleansing and disinfection (C and D) to the satisfaction of DEFRA veterinary staff. DEFRA normally pays the costs of secondary C and D, providing farms are in a reasonable state of cleanliness and repair, there are no health and safety implications for those concerned and the costs incurred are proportionate to the individual farm situation. In the small number of cases where secondary C and D does not take place, the premises are required to remain under restrictions for twelve months.

• On current progress, it is expected that secondary C and D will be completed on nearly all premises by the middle of
February 2002. Nearly 300 of those premises eligible will not undergo secondary C and D, e.g. because of the disproportionate costs involved, farmers leaving agriculture or not restocking, poor state of the farm, health and safety implications.

- The total cost of C and D (including preliminary C and D but excluding ash removal, seized and destroyed items, pyre building, field reinstatement, slurry disposal etc) is estimated to total about £245m, roughly £35k per premise throughout the Country. Currently, costs amount to about £230m (including those completed, and to date on those currently undergoing C and D). This compares with the estimate of £875m in total, £100k per farm, that was being suggested in mid July, and based on comparable Swine Fever costs and relatively limited details of completed C and D on FMD premises.

- The £245m and £230m are still subject to some refinement as final invoices are awaited, disputed invoices resolved and wrongly attributed non-C and D costs are apportioned elsewhere.

- Within these figures, there continues to be regional variations due to size and complexity of farms, the number of premises where C and D was completed early on with a significant proportion of the work undertaken by contractors with higher rates rather than farmers themselves, etc.

- Since 5 August, with renegotiated contracts in place, farmers have been encouraged to undertake the work themselves wherever possible. Many farmers have taken advantage of this opportunity and this has resulted in a reduction (significant in some cases) in average costs, both on those where C and D was suspended at the end of July, and on new premises where work commenced post 5 August.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):

IMPORT CONTROLS

- There can be no guarantee that no exotic disease will be imported, no matter how stringent our controls. It remains vital that farmers take effective biosecurity measures to minimise the possibility of spread of any disease.

- Imports of meat into any EU state from a third country must conform with EU rules, setting strict conditions and veterinary certification. Plus, meat consignments must be presented on arrival to a Border Inspection Post (BIP) where all consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20% of consignments undergo physical checks. The performance of BIPs is audited by the European Commission’s Food and Veterinary Office and monitored by DEFRA.

- Where imports are of food, DEFRA is advised by the Food Standards Agency, which is responsible for issues of food safety. In light of current concerns about illegal imports of food of animal origin, the Food Standards Agency has written to port health authorities and local authorities to ensure continued vigilance and checks on imported products both at the point of import and at the retail level.

- It is recognised that illegal imports of meat do arise, mainly by (a) individual travellers bringing small quantities in their luggage and (b) traders hiding meat in containers ostensibly holding other products. Detection of the latter relies on spot checks, usually by HM Customs.

- Have taken the following steps to improve action against illegal imports:

  Improved publicity:
  • Arranged for posters to be put up at main airports advising incoming passengers what can be brought in legally;
  • Provided information to travellers via airlines, travel agents and British Embassies abroad;

  Improved enforcement powers:
  • Our national regulations have been amended to assist local authorities in seizing suspected illegal imports when they are found at point of sale;

  Improved information sharing:
  • Established improved procedures for sharing information about illegal activities amongst the departments and enforcement authorities involved (DEFRA, HM Customs & Excise, Port Health Authorities & Local Authorities);

  Improved analysis of the problem:
  • We are building up a database of details to improve the targeting of enforcement resources to where the risks are greatest;
  • These measures are being kept under review and the Government will continue to make improvements as necessary. For example, we are considering the possible use of sniffer dogs and x-ray machines at ports and airports.
DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
THE IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE

• Disease has clearly had an acute adverse impact on the farming industry.

• Government announced on 8 May a range of measures amounting to £15.4m to support farmers; consisting of
  • £10.4m for an enhanced Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS) offering up to 5 days of free business advice for farmers
    whose livestock have been slaughtered under the foot and mouth control measures;
  • £2m in grant aid made available under a new round of the Agricultural Development Scheme, to improve marketing
    performance and competitiveness of sectors affected by foot and mouth;
  • £3m for a targeted trade development and market campaign, made available through Food from Britain who will co-
    ordinate their campaign with the Countryside Agency, Meat and Livestock Commission and others with an active interest.

• The Rural Development Service ran 23 seminars during July and August for farmers who had their stock culled (in
  addition to the FBAS visit) to provide advice on business and farm operational issues. 2016 delegates attended. A
  regional contact service has been established to provide further advice and advice.

• All this is in addition to the over £1 billion paid out to farmers in compensation for animals slaughtered due to foot and
  mouth disease.

• DEFRA has made available approaching £1m over 2000/01 and 2001/02 to support farmers through a Rural Stress Action
  Plan (RSAP), part of the Prime Minister’s Action Plan for Farming.

• Further funding of £400,000 for the second RSAP was announced on 3 August to continue the work being carried out.
  The RSAP Group represents an unprecedented partnership between Government, the voluntary mental health sector
  (including the Samaritans) and national farming organisations and aims to deliver support to and make a real difference
  to those in distress.

• The Government has funded the Rural Stress Information Network (RSIN) to establish a network of support available to
  people in rural communities who are suffering from stress. The network includes professional health care staff and
  voluntary organisations with relevant expertise (Samaritans, MIND etc) together with legal, financial and business
  support.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS

• On 23 February, as soon as it became apparent that the disease was not confined to the area around the first outbreaks
  in Essex, the whole of Great Britain was declared to be a controlled area. On veterinary advice an immediate standstill
  was imposed on the movement of all FMD susceptible animals in Great Britain.

• Animal movements were subsequently allowed subject to licence and in accordance with the terms and conditions of
  such licences. These have been allowed in accordance with veterinary risk assessments, location and the changing disease
  situation.

• Movement direct to slaughter for human consumption at approved slaughterhouses under licence from a local authority
  was allowed from 2 March for animals outside Infected Areas. Subsequently, the scope of these movements was
  extended as follows:
  • From 23 April, animals were allowed to move to slaughter from within an Infected Area to a slaughterhouse in the same
    Infected Area (unless the holding of origin was within a Protection Zone).
  • From 3 May animals from farms in Protection Zones (once 15 days had passed since the preliminary disinfection of the
    relevant Infected Place) were allowed to move to slaughter in the same Infected Area.
  • From 21 June, animals from farms in an Infected Area were able to move to slaughter outside the Infected Area as long
    as they were not from holdings in a 10 km Surveillance Zone around an Infected Place within the first 30 days after
    disease had been confirmed and subject to various additional conditions including a distance limit of 250 km on the
    journey to the slaughterhouse and a requirement that the slaughterhouse could not be in a Provisionally Free Area.
  • From 28 June, animals were allowed to move to a licensed collecting centre before further movement to an approved
    slaughterhouse.

• Additionally movements of animals under licence other than to slaughter for human consumption have been allowed as
  follows:
  • On 9 March, arrangements were introduced to allow movements of animals under licence on welfare grounds across
    roads on the same holding and between local holdings under the same ownership subject to certain restrictions and
    conditions. Initially these were for welfare reasons only but from the end of April, such movements could be for general
    husbandry and management purposes.
On 19 March, arrangements were introduced for movements of animals under licence over longer distances, also subject to restrictions and conditions.

From 11 May, licensed movements of sheep to common grazings were allowed. Bulls, boars and rams for breeding could also be moved under the Longer Distance Scheme without a qualifying welfare need.

From 23 May, movements of animals from premises under Form D restrictions were allowed.

From 21 June, animals could be moved for veterinary treatment and emergency special needs under Animal Treatment Licenses.

From 5 July, sheep could be moved from open hills and moors for shearing or other essential husbandry purposes.

From 1 August, the Over Thirty Months Scheme has been re-opened for cattle.

A new system of licensing movements by local authorities was introduced from 17 September for FMD free counties; 24 September for animals other than sheep in at risk or higher risk counties and on 1 October for sheep in at risk and higher risk counties. A new sole occupancy licence was introduced on 6 October for movements between holdings under sole occupation within a 10km radius. These movements can be for either welfare or commercial reasons.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
THE IMPACT ON THE RURAL ECONOMY

Short Term Survival
- The most effective way to help is to bring the disease to an end as quickly as possible and to re-open the countryside to visitors. But we also need to help affected rural businesses cope. We are doing this through:

- Deferring tax, VAT and National Insurance payments, without interest charges, for severely affected businesses (22,000 businesses having over £191m deferred as at 27 November);

- Deferring and/or giving hardship relief (writing off) rate payments through new funding arrangements to meet centrally 95-98% of costs for rural local authorities to help businesses under £12,000 Rateable Value (worth up to £3,000 over 9 months), and businesses under £50,000 RV (worth up to £12,000) in the worst affected areas;

- Helping businesses adjust to FMD impacts by making grants, from the Business Recovery Fund (£74m), run by the RDAs, which is funding business improvements, training and loan interest costs (5,600 grant approvals worth £22m have been issued with £9m actually paid to individual businesses); BRF also supports local/regional tourism promotion and rural regeneration projects which help bring visitors back to rural areas more quickly;

- Fast-tracking and prioritising other measures to speed up rural regeneration, for example rapid introduction of mandatory rate relief for pubs, garages, and other food shops in small settlements, and extending the Market Towns programme to include towns badly affected by FMD;

- Helping small businesses without security access bank lending by extending the Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme to new sectors and creating new flexibilities on interest and capital repayments. (Take-up has been very low, however.)

- Have matched nearly £14m in donations from the public to charitable organisations that are helping farmers and rural communities hit by FMD. A further £2m extension to the scheme was announced on 6 November.

Longer term rural revival
- The Haskins and Rural Task Force reports, published 18 October, contain wide range of recommendations for sustainable rural recovery. The Government has responded to these.

- Rural White Paper: fast-tracking of further elements.

- ERDP - seven-year programme will help projects which will contribute to the creation of diverse and competitive agricultural and forestry sectors.

- Action plans being developed in worst affected areas: Cumbria Rural Action Zone and Devon Recovery Plan.

DEFRA COMMENTS TO INQUIRIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD):
ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

- The top priority is to beat the disease and, to this end, tight biosecurity is essential.

- A precautionary response was understandable in the early days of the FMD outbreak and most local authorities made use of powers then available to impose blanket closures on the rights of way network.

- Regulatory controls over public access to the countryside must be proportionate to the risk of spreading FMD, taking account of the prevailing disease situation, and a risk based approach was adopted. Veterinary Risk Assessments have
been reviewed and revised as the outbreak progressed.

- On 18 May, the veterinary risk assessment was revised and recommended that regulatory controls on public use of rights of way should be confined to agricultural premises and agricultural land within 3 km Protection Zones round an Infected Place. Elsewhere, the public were encouraged to accept responsibility to owners and occupiers of the land they crossed by having regard to Codes which applied in Infected Areas and elsewhere, e.g. by staying off farmland if they had recently handled farm animals and by avoiding contact with livestock.

- In the light of the revised Veterinary Risk Assessment, on 23 May the Government issued guidance to local authorities in England encouraging the re-opening of footpaths where it was safe to do so, outside 3 km Protection Zones.

- Progress by local authorities towards re-opening their footpaths was slower than anticipated, so on 20 July, following consultation with the local authorities, the Government revoked most remaining blanket right of way closures previously imposed by local authorities.

- Exemptions from the revocation of blanket closures were given to six local authorities worst affected by FMD, for all or part of their areas: Cumbria (whole county), Devon, Durham, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Lancashire. These were granted on logistical grounds, as many thousands of footpaths would have had to be re-signed individually as closed.

- The exemptions have been reviewed, and three of the authorities (Devon, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire) have lifted their exemptions by completely re-opening all their footpaths except those across premises remaining under veterinary restrictions. The exemptions for Cumbria, Durham and Lancashire are being considered further in the light of revised veterinary risk assessment and local authority guidance on re-opening footpaths issued on 7 December.

- Given the exceptional circumstances leading to the imposition of Restricted Infected Areas (“Blue Boxes”), Government accepted that footpaths within the boxes should remain closed if such an Area is declared.

- On 7 December, the revised veterinary risk assessment on re-opening public footpaths was issued along with revised Government guidance to local authorities that footpaths, apart from those going through farmyards or buildings, across premises under veterinary restrictions (Form A, ‘modified’ Form D or FM37B ‘article 38’ Notices) could be re-opened subject to specific criteria.

- Local authorities were encouraged to work closely with their local DEFRA Divisional Veterinary Managers to establish exactly which footpaths could be re-opened as a result of this development, but no significant further re-openings were expected until that process was completed.

- A media campaign was conducted to inform the public about access to the countryside. Key in this was the need to ensure that those wishing to visit the countryside had access to accurate information on the foot and mouth situation. Despite careful media choices to ensure that coverage across England and Wales was as thorough and even as possible, difficulties persisted in the level of accuracy of information available to the public on what was open.

- www.countryside.gov.uk or individual local authority websites also gave more information about footpath re-opening.

- Some concern has been expressed at the mixed message: on the one hand, maintain tight biosecurity; on the other, get visitors back to the countryside. There is no inconsistency between the two. The risks are of a very different order. The current Veterinary Risk Assessment notes that transmission by people has been recorded on many occasions, but those responsible have generally had close contact with animals on infected, and then on uninfected, premises. It is theoretically possible that walkers could carry infection to previously uninfected animals, although there is no evidence that this has actually happened and the risk, if any, is small in comparison to other transmission risks. It also notes that even small risks can be further diminished by appropriate action. Footpath users should continue to observe sensible precautions, including making use of biosecurity measures provided by farmers.