

Contents

Foot and mouth disease in Algeria: disease situation as of 24 March 1999

35

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN ALGERIA
Disease situation as of 24 March 1999

FOLLOW-UP REPORT No. 1

Translation of extracts from a fax received on 24 March 1999 from Dr Rachid Bouguedour, Director of Animal Health Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Algiers:

End of previous report period: 25 February 1999 (see *Disease Information*, **12** [7], 21, dated 26 February 1999).

Total number of outbreaks since the appearance of the disease: since the start of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) epizootic (20 February 1999), 158 establishments and 139 of the country's 1,541 districts have been affected.

There was a marked increase in the number of outbreaks in the second week of the epizootic, between 25 February and 3 March 1999. Slaughter was rapidly carried out and generalised vaccination operations allowed an initial systematic control of virtually all the national cattle population to be carried out. From 4 March, the number of outbreaks started to fall.

No new outbreaks have been recorded since 18 March 1999.

Location of the outbreaks:

Wilayas in the centre of the country were the worst affected: Tizi-Ouzou, Blida, Boumerdes and Bouira. These wilayas are all situated around the capital and included 94 infected establishments, all in close proximity, with a total of 800 cases. It should be noted that these infected wilayas lie along the Setif - Governorate of Greater Algiers - Blida main road axis.

Central wilayas	No. of farms infected
Blida	15
Bouira	11
Boumerdes	8
Governorate of Greater Algiers	38
Tizi-Ouzou	22
Total	94

Western wilayas	No. of farms infected
Chlef	4
Mascara	7
Mostaganem	10
Relizane	12
Tissemssilt	5
Tlemcen	1
Total	39

Eastern wilayas	No. of farms infected
Bejaia	5
Bourdj Bou Arreridj	3
Guelma	4
Oum El Bouaghi	3
Setif	10
Total	25

Description of affected population in the outbreaks: beef cattle account for 90% of the cases. The remainder consist of indigenous breed cows, a few heifers, and dairy cows.

Total number of animals in the outbreaks:

1. Central wilayas

species	susceptible	cases	deaths	destroyed	slaughtered
bov	1,826	800	42	761	1,023
ovi	12	0	0	0	12
TOTAL	1,838	800	42	761	1,035

2. Western wilayas

species	susceptible	cases	deaths	destroyed	slaughtered
bov	320	162	2	160	158
ovi	121	0	0	0	121
TOTAL	441	162	2	160	279

3. Eastern wilayas

species	susceptible	cases	deaths	destroyed	slaughtered
bov	870	322	0	322	548
ovi	311	0	0	181	130
cap	51	0	0	46	5
TOTAL	1,232	322	0	549	683

Diagnosis:

- A. Laboratory where diagnosis was made:** OIE World Reference Laboratory for FMD (Pirbright, United Kingdom).
- B. Diagnostic tests used:** virus isolation and sequencing of the isolated strain (8 March 1999).
- C. Causal agent:** FMD virus type O. Sequencing of the isolated strain has shown it to be different from the type O strains held at Pirbright, and in particular the strain currently circulating in several Middle Eastern countries, and from the strain which circulated in the Maghreb between 1989 and 1992. It is, however, very similar to strains circulating in West Africa.

Epidemiology:

- A. Source of agent / origin of infection:** zebus smuggled into the south of the country in February were intercepted in the Sahara, south of El Bayadh and Bechar wilayas and in the south of El Oued wilaya, and were destroyed. It should be noted that these animals did not present clinical signs of FMD. The introduction of these animals, coupled with the results of sequencing of the causal strain, confirms our suspicions as to the source of the disease.
- B. Mode of spread:**
The first FMD cases were reported almost simultaneously, on 20 and 21 February 1999, in the districts of Soudania and Birtouta (Governorate of Greater Algiers).

The infected animals had been acquired at the El Harrach transit centre on 17 February 1999. The investigation carried out at this level indicated that the infected cattle had belonged to a dealer from Setif wilaya and had arrived at the transit centre on 16 February, and that cattle from the same consignment were sold to dealers from Tizi-Ouzou, Boumerdes, Bouira and Medea wilayas (in the centre of the country), and Relizane, Mostaganem and Mascara wilayas (in the west of the country), resulting in the appearance of outbreaks in these regions after an interval of ten days.

Furthermore, on 22 February, an (isolated) FMD outbreak was suspected in the district of Khemissa (Souk Ahras wilaya), in the east of the country, and on 23 February in the district of Meskiana (Oum-El-Bouaghi wilaya), on the border with Tunisia.

Between 23 and 26 February, all cattle acquired on 17 February from the El Harrach transit centre were found to have clinical signs of the disease (at Boumerdes, Setif and Medea on 24 February and at Bouira, Bordj-Bou-Argeridj and Relizane on 25 February).

Other outbreaks were subsequently declared in the west of the country, along the line of the main trunk road (Route Nationale No. 2), the most westerly being in the district of Sebdeou (Tlemcen wilaya), on the border with Morocco, which was detected on 8 March.

Control measures:

A. Sanitary measures: information was communicated via the mass media from 22 February to alert livestock producers and call on them to participate in the control programme in order to protect their livestock. For preventive purposes, producers were requested:

- to refrain from acquiring new animals and introducing them into their herds,
- to halt all animal movements,
- to disinfect within animal sheds and at access points,
- to refuse entry to anyone from outside the farm,
- to facilitate veterinary control visits and report any clinical signs suggestive of FMD.

The closure of livestock markets and ban on the movement of animals throughout the country came into effect on 23 February.

At the level of the affected establishments, all the infected cattle were destroyed, and in-contact animals were slaughtered with recovery of the meat, the carcasses being released after maturation for 36 hours at + 4°C. These farms were depopulated and disinfected, and surveillance was stepped up around the outbreaks.

B. Medical measures:

During the first week of the epizootic, vaccination was carried out around the outbreaks. Vaccination was then extended to the entire national bovine herd. To date, more than 800,000 head of cattle have been vaccinated out of a total population of 1.2 million. The operation is being actively pursued. The animals will receive a booster vaccination one month after the first vaccination.

Additionally, following the notification of FMD cases in sheep in Tunisia (see *Disease Information*, **12** [8], 24, dated 5 March 1999), nearly 200,000 sheep were vaccinated along the border with that country.

C. Epidemiological surveillance:

A nation-wide appeal for vigilance was launched, with a survey of all farms, mobilisation of the entire veterinary profession, including private practitioners, and the setting up of a central emergency unit pour to monitor the health situation throughout the country.

A press conference was held at the Ministry of Agriculture. This provided a means of informing livestock producers, and announcements calling for vigilance were published in several newspapers.

A control system was designed to allow any suspected cases of FMD to be dealt with urgently.

The support of livestock producers for the disease control plan has greatly facilitated the application of sanitary measures.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever by the Central Bureau of the Office International des Epizooties concerning the legal status of any country or territory mentioned, or its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Unless otherwise stated, material published is derived from declarations made to the Central Bureau by the Veterinary Administrations of the countries and territories mentioned.