

THE GLOBAL SITUATION OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE OCCURRENCE AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- Jef Hammond, Nigel Ferris, Yanmin Li, Nick Knowles, Donald King & David J Paton
Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright Laboratory, Woking, Surrey, GU240NF, U.K

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is difficult to control because of its highly contagious nature, its ability to infect different domestic and wildlife hosts and its causation by multiple non-cross-protective virus serotypes. The occurrence of FMD continues to largely reflect economic prosperity with developed countries having eradicated the disease and developing countries struggling or unable to do so. Geographic isolation can favour FMD eradication, but increasing globalisation broadens the threat. Movement of live animals still constitutes by far the greatest risk for spread of FMD, followed by trade in animal products and in parts of Africa, the Cape Buffalo provides an important reservoir for the maintenance of certain FMD virus serotypes. The FMD virus continues to evolve, giving rise to new strains that cause periodic upsurges in the number of cases and increase the risk of spread into new areas. An OIE/FAO Network of FMD Reference Laboratories has been established to help track the emergence and distribution of different FMD virus variants, to make recommendations on vaccine strains needed in different parts of the world and to raise standards of laboratory testing. In many parts of the world, the main barriers to FMD virus spread seem to operate at a regional rather than a national level, consistent with attempts to establish regional disease control programmes. The worldwide distribution of the different serotypes and subtypes of FMD virus will be reviewed in this context.

