

ANNEX XVII

CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINGENCY PLANS

Member States shall ensure that contingency plans meet at least the following requirements:

1. Provision shall be made to ensure the legal powers necessary for the implementation of contingency plans and allow for a rapid and successful eradication campaign.
2. Provision must be made to ensure access to emergency funds, budgetary means and financial resources in order to cover all aspects of the fight against a foot-and-mouth disease epizootic.
3. A chain of command shall be established guaranteeing a rapid and effective decision-making process for dealing with foot-and-mouth disease epizootics. A central decision-making unit shall be in charge of the overall direction of control strategies and the chief veterinary officer shall be a member of this unit.
4. Each Member State must be prepared to immediately establish a functional national disease control centre in the event of an outbreak, which shall coordinate the implementation of all decisions taken in the central decision-making unit. A permanently operational coordinator shall be appointed to guarantee the prompt establishment of the centre.
5. Detailed plans shall be available to enable a Member State to be prepared for the immediate establishment of local disease control centres in the event of foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks in order to implement disease control and environment protection measures at a local level.
6. Member States shall ensure the cooperation between the national disease control centre, the local disease control centres and environmental competent authorities and bodies in order to ensure that actions on veterinary and environmental safety issues are appropriately coordinated.
7. A permanently operational expert group shall be created, where necessary in collaboration with other Member States, to maintain expertise and assist the relevant authority in qualitative disease preparedness.
8. Provision must be made for adequate resources to ensure a rapid and effective campaign, including personnel, equipment and laboratory capacity.
9. An up-to-date operations manual shall be available. It shall describe in detail and in a comprehensive and practical way all the actions procedures, instructions and control measures to be employed in handling an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.
10. Detailed plans shall be available for emergency vaccination.
11. Staff shall be regularly involved in:
 - 11.1. training in clinical signs, epidemiological enquiry and control of epizootic diseases;
 - 11.2. real-time alert exercises, conducted as follows:
 - 11.2.1. two times within a five years period, the first of which should not have started later than 3 years after the approval of the plan, or
 - 11.2.2. during the five years period after an outbreak of a major epizootic disease has been effectively controlled and eradicated, or

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- 11.2.3. one of the two exercises referred to in paragraph 11.2.1 is replaced by a real-time exercise required within the framework of contingency plans for other major epidemic diseases affecting terrestrial animals, or
- 11.2.4. by way of derogation from paragraph 11.2.1 and subject to appropriate provisions in the contingency plan, Member States with a limited population of animals of susceptible species arrange for the participation in and contribution to real-time exercises carried out in a neighbouring Member States and alarm-drills are carried out as provided for in paragraph (g) (ii) of Annex VII of Directive 2001/89/EC in relation to all animals of species susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease.
- 11.3. Training in communication skills to provide ongoing disease awareness campaigns for authorities, farmers and veterinarians.
12. Contingency Plans shall be prepared taking into account the resources needed to control a large number of outbreaks occurring within a short time and caused by several antigenically distinct serotypes or strains as it may be necessary amongst others in the case of deliberate release of foot-and-mouth disease virus.
13. Without prejudice to veterinary requirements, contingency plans shall be prepared with a view to ensuring that in the event of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, any mass disposal of animal carcasses and animal waste is done without endangering human health and without using processes or methods which prevent any avoidable damage to the environment and in particular:
 - (i) with a minimum risk to soil, air, surface and groundwater, to plants and animals,
 - (ii) with a minimum nuisance through noise or odours,
 - (iii) with a minimum adverse effect to the countryside or places of special interest.
14. Such plans shall include the identification of appropriate sites and undertakings for the treatment or disposal of animal carcasses and animal waste in the event of an outbreak.
15. Member State shall ensure that farmers, the rural populace and the population in general are kept informed. Direct and accessible contact shall be provided for the inhabitants of affected areas (inter alia via helplines), as well as information through the national and regional media.