

The Secure Milk Supply Plan for Continuity of Business in the event of an FMD Outbreak in the United States

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Introduction

The United States' response to a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak will involve movement restrictions, enhanced biosecurity, surveillance, depopulation, and vaccination. FMD was eradicated from the U.S. in 1929; an introduction could devastate livestock producers and the U.S. economy, necessitating preparedness planning. The Secure Milk Supply (SMS) Plan provides continuity of business guidance for dairy premises that are under movement restrictions during an FMD outbreak but whose cattle have no evidence of infection. FMD is not a public health or food safety concern.

Aim

The SMS Plan aimed to develop:

- procedures to collect and transport raw milk from farms with no evidence of FMD infection in regulatory control areas;
- movement permit guidance; and
- training materials for enhanced biosecurity and surveillance to decrease transmission risk while supporting business continuity.

Methods

Funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from 2009-2017 allowed academic partners to draft guidance documents, two proactive risk assessments, and outreach and training videos. These were reviewed and suggestions for improvement made by dairy industry representatives, state and federal officials. Enhanced biosecurity resources (checklists, templates, line of separation examples) were pilot tested throughout the U.S. on dairy operations. Surveillance methods based on current capabilities were described and gaps identified.

Results

The multi-year collaborative effort resulted in the 10-page SMS Plan and associated resources available at www.securemilk.org. Producers can use the SMS resources to prepare to meet movement requirements while preventing FMD exposure. The SMS Plan provides guidance only. Regulatory Officials will make decisions in an actual outbreak based on the unique characteristics of each outbreak.

Conclusion

An FMD response will focus on stopping the spread of this animal disease and disrupt animal agriculture's normal movements. The SMS Plan offers guidance for stakeholders to move raw milk and other critical movements to maintain business continuity during an outbreak.