



LANDBÚNAÐAR-
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Agricultural Authority of Iceland

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASES

2007

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1. Legal powers

Provisions regarding animal diseases and preventive measures against them are laid down in Act no. 25/1993.

“The purpose of the act is a) to promote the good health of animals in Iceland and to prevent new contagious diseases from being brought to the country, b) to monitor and prevent the spreading of animal diseases and to work toward their eradication and c) to ensure that livestock products, produced in Iceland, be as wholesome as possible.” (Art. 1, Act no. 25/1993).

1.1 The notification of suspected animal disease

“Any person who has reason to believe that an animal is suffering from a contagious disease covered by the Act shall immediately report this to any veterinarian who can be reached or to the police. The police shall immediately contact a veterinarian. If a veterinarian feels there is a reason to take action, he shall immediately take steps to have his diagnosis of the disease confirmed and to prevent the disease from spreading. If testing shows or if a veterinarian suspects this to be a contagious disease, specified in Appendix 1 of this Act or a contagious disease previously unknown in this country, the veterinarian shall immediately inform the Agricultural Authority of Iceland. He shall furthermore prohibit any delivery of the animal or products from being distributed, and shall ensure that the animal is isolated as well as other animals that may be contagious, and isolate their immediate surroundings. He shall also ensure that articles and products that have been in contact with the animal be disinfected or destroyed, and that the animal be put down, or that other measures considered necessary assistance regarding the precautionary measures taken on the grounds of this paragraph. ...”(Art. 5, Act no. 25/1993).

1.2 The slaughter of infected and contact animals, the destruction of carcasses, sanitation and other procedures at infected premises, vaccination

“According to this Act and subject to suggestions from the Agricultural Authority of Iceland, the Minister of Agriculture may issue orders on any measures considered necessary to eradicate or prevent the spreading of the animal diseases specified in Appendices 1 and 2, and to prevent danger and damage caused by the spreading of the said diseases. The measures apply to the following:

1. Animals:
 - a. Testing, including the taking of samples for diagnosis
 - b. Treatment of diseases
 - c. Immunization measures

- d. Marking and isolation
 - e. Monitoring
 - f. Putting down animals and destruction
 2. Livestock products, feed, fertilizers from animal droppings and other infected articles which may be carriers:
 - a. Testing for possible contagion
 - b. Pasteurization, disinfection and sterilization
 - c. Destruction
 3. Buildings, work sites, machinery, tools, and vehicles:
 - a. Cleaning and disinfecting
 - b. Monitoring and isolation
 4. Owners and guardians of animals, their staff, clothes, and equipment which may carry contagion:
 - a. Testing, including sampling and diagnosis
 - b. Cleaning, disinfecting and destruction of clothing
- (Art. 8, Act no. 25/1993).

1.3 The control of movements and other restrictions

“The Minister of Agriculture is authorized to limit or ban the keeping of animals in specified areas if it may be anticipated, in the opinion of the Agricultural Authority of Iceland, that the health of the animals may be subject to special threats.” (Art. 9, Act no. 25/1993).

“The Agricultural Authority of Iceland is authorized to limit or prohibit the transport of animals, articles or equipment between or within isolation areas if he considers this to cause or be likely to cause the spreading of animal diseases”. (Art. 11, Act no. 25/1993).

1.4 The access to holdings keeping animals

“The Agricultural Authority of Iceland, community veterinarians and their representatives shall, at any time, be authorized access to housing, farms and enterprises where animals or their products are stored, and shall be provided with all necessary information for monitoring and testing as requested on the basis of this Act.” (Art. 22, Act no. 25/1993).

1.5 The access to sites to be used for destruction of carcasses

The municipalities shall ensure that a site is available for disposal of all waste that is produced. The sites shall be authorized by the Food- and Environmental Agency. (Regulation no. 737/2003).

2. Financial provisions

2.1 The costs of personnel over and above normal running costs

“The fees and travel expenses because of the efforts of a veterinarian or others undertaking projects resulting from the execution of this Act as instructed by the Agricultural Authority of Iceland shall be paid by the State Treasury.” (Art. 16, Act no. 25/1993).

2.2 The costs of capital equipment and consumable items, slaughter and destruction of carcasses/contaminated material, and sanitation

“The State Treasury pays the costs entailed in the isolation of livestock, decided upon as a preventive measure regarding the diseases listed in Appendix 1 of this Act, as well as the cost of materials because of the necessary cleaning and disinfection, and the costs entailed in the putting down of animals, the destruction of carcasses and the use of equipment required or the aforementioned tasks. The State pays the costs entailed in the isolation and guarding of areas, provided the isolation is made at the direction of the Minister of Agriculture. The owners of livestock have the duty to provide, free of charge, all manual labor and assistance for cleaning, disinfecting and putting down of animals.” (Art. 17, Act no. 25/1993).

2.3 The costs of compensation payments to owners of animals

“The owners of livestock put down at the direction of the Minister of Agriculture upon the recommendation by the Agricultural Authority of Iceland, have right to compensation by the State Treasury.

Compensation paid by the State Treasury shall amount to the value of products and operational loss provably resulting from the destruction of the animal. The provisions of this paragraph on compensation may be deviated from when instructions are issued on the reduction of breeding stock.

If partial or full utilization of the animal products is possible, the value of the products shall be deducted from the total compensation. Compensation shall not be paid for animals negligible value, except for special valid reasons.

The State Treasury’s compensation duty under this Act applies only to livestock.” (Art. 20, Act no. 25/1993).

2.4 The costs of emergency vaccination

Vaccination against exotic animal diseases is prohibited; they shall be eradicated by stamping out. (Regulation no. 665/2001).

3. The chain of command and the initial response

3.1 The general public

Anyone who has a suspicion that an animal is suffering from a contagious disease shall immediately report this to any veterinarian who can be reached or to the police.

3.2 The police

If the police get a notice on a suspicion of a serious contagious disease in animals, they shall immediately contact the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) of concern, or the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) at the Agricultural Authority of Iceland (AAI).

3.3 The laboratories

If the laboratory personnel gets a suspicion that an animal is or has been suffering from a serious contagious disease (notifiable), they shall act as follows:

- Notify the DVO of concern, without delay
- Notify the AAI, without delay
- Follow the DVO's instruction on further investigation
- Make necessary arrangements to prevent spreading of the infection

3.4 Private veterinary practitioners

If a veterinarian gets a suspicion that an animal is suffering from a serious contagious disease (notifiable), he shall act as follows:

- Inform the owner of the animals about the suspicion and give him instructions on precautionary measures to prevent the spreading of the infection
- Notify the DVO of concern, without delay

- Follow the DVO's instruction on precautionary measures, sampling and investigation
- Give orders about precautionary measures, i.e.:
 - Housing of all animals on the premises
 - Prohibit any transportation of animals to or from the premises
 - Prohibit any transportation of animal products, carcasses, waste, feed and other fomites, to and from the premises
 - Prohibit people admission to the premises, except necessary
 - Register names and telephone number of all people who leave the premises
 - Inform all people who leave the premises about the disease and make them alert about the risk of spreading the infection. Order them to change clothes before leaving.
 - Make a list of registration numbers of all vehicles which leave the premises. Ensure that the vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before departure.

3.5 The District Veterinary Officers

If a DVO gets a suspicion that an animal is or has been suffering from a serious contagious disease, or he receives a notification about a suspicion, he shall act as follows:

- Notify, by using a special form, the suspicion to:
 - The owner of the animals
 - The AAI head quarters
 - All people who are connected to the premises of concern
 - The manager of the slaughterhouse of concern, if relevant
 - The transport companies associated with the farm or the slaughterhouse
 - The manager of the dairy plant of concern, if relevant
- Contact the official laboratory at Keldur and make arrangements to have the diagnosis proved or disproved
- Take samples and send them to the official laboratory at Keldur
- Give orders about the first precautionary measures, i.e.:
 - Put up a band around the premises and place a notice at each entrance, indicating the circumstances and prohibiting admission
 - Housing of all animals on the premises
 - Prohibit any transportation of animals to or from the premises
 - Prohibit any transportation of animal products, carcasses, waste, feed and other fomites, to and from the premises
 - Prohibit people admission to the premises, except necessary
 - Register names and telephone number of all people who leave the premises
 - Inform all people who leave the premises about the disease and make them alert about the risk of spreading the infection. Order them to change clothes before leaving

- Make a list of registration numbers of all vehicles which leave the premises. Ensure that the vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before departure
- Collect information about contact farms and about all people who have visited the farm for the last 3 weeks, using a special form.
- Collect further information about possible transmission and spreading of the infection
- Make decisions about and prepare:
 - Culling
 - Disposal of carcasses and fomites
 - Cleansing and disinfection of buildings
 - Cleansing and disinfection of vehicles

3.6 The Chief Veterinary Officer

When the CVO receives a notification about a suspicion of a serious contagious disease in animals, he shall act as follows:

- Notify the Minister of Agriculture orally
- Put forward suggestions about:
 - Whether a temporary ban on all transport of animals and fomites should be enforced, within a specific area or in the whole country (with reference to Act no. 25/1993).
 - The placement and size of the protection-, surveillance- and restriction zones.
 - Further investigations.
- Assist the DVO in:
 - Making a decision about precautionary measures on the infected premises
- Be in charge of interaction with the press
 - Arrange and administer press meetings

3.7 The Director General of the Agricultural Authority

When the Director General of the Agricultural Authority receives a notification about a suspicion of a serious contagious disease in animals, he shall act as follows:

- Notify the suspicion in writing to:
 - The Minister of Agriculture
 - The AAI personnel
 - The press
 - Relevant authorities abroad
- Put up a disease control centre and assemble veterinary specialists, technical assistants etc.

4. Disease Control Centers

4.1 The main disease control centre

In the event of an outbreak of a serious contagious animal disease, the AAI head quarters serve as the main disease control centre. The head quarters are equipped with all necessary tools for communication, computers, maps, list of all people who need to be notified and contacted, etc.

The Veterinary Officer for Epidemiology, administer the main disease control centre.

The primary tasks of the main disease control centre are as follows:

- Distribute information about the situation
- Collect and analyze epidemiological data
 - Detect contact premises and other premises at risk
 - Detect people who have been at infected premises
- Prevent spreading of the infection
 - Contact people at the contact premises and give instructions about precautionary measures
 - Contact people who have been at infected premises and give instruction about precautionary measures
- Assist the DVOs in making decisions about and prepare:
 - Precautionary measures at the infected premises
 - Culling
 - Disposal of carcasses and fomites
 - Cleansing and disinfection of buildings
 - Cleansing and disinfection of vehicles

4.2 The local disease control centers

In the event of an outbreak of a serious contagious animal disease, the DVO offices serve as local disease control centers. The offices are equipped with all necessary tools for communication, computers, maps, list of all people who need to be notified and contacted, etc.

5. Expert group

If a suspicion on a notifiable disease arises, the Minister of Agriculture designates three persons to an expert group, which role is to assist the AAI in the disease outbreak management. The three persons shall be: A veterinary expert in diseases of the relevant animal species, a pathologist, and a microbiologist or an epidemiologist. (Regulation no. 665/2001).

6. Resources for disease emergencies – personnel

The Agricultural Authority has at its command veterinary experts in the field of diseases of each of the following animal species: Cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, fish, mink and foxes. In addition: A veterinary pathologist, a veterinary epidemiologist, experts in meat science and experts in animal feed science.

7. Resources for disease emergencies – equipment and facilities

At the AAI head quarters and the DVO offices, all necessary equipment for the initial response to a suspicion of a serious contagious disease in animals is on hand.

8. Instructions for dealing with exotic disease outbreaks – operational manual

Every DVO, and other AAI personnel who participate in the control of animal diseases, are equipped with a folder, which comprises a diagram for the chain of command, a checklist for the initial response, various guidelines, information about some diseases, forms for notification and submission of samples, forms for collection of epidemiological data etc. Some of this is also accessible on the AAI website www.lbs.is.

9. Diagnostic laboratories

Institute for Experimental Pathology at Keldur is an authorized laboratory, which is responsible for diagnosis of diseases in animals and has an advisory role for the AAI, regarding animal diseases. (Act no. 67/1990). The institute has made agreements with the Danish Veterinary Institute in Denmark and the Veterinary Laboratory Agency in the UK, covering services urgently needed to confirm or rule out suspicion of an outbreak of exotic animal virus diseases.

10. Contingency plans for emergency vaccination

Vaccination against exotic animal diseases, is prohibited, they shall be eradicated by stamping out. (Regulation no. 665/2001).

11. Training

Seminars and exercises in disease outbreak management are arranged for all AAI personnel, including veterinary experts and DVOs. Others, who would play a part in the management of an outbreak, are invited to participate in the seminars and exercises.

12. Disease awareness

Information on exotic animal diseases can be found on the AAI website, as well as instructions for initial response and notification procedures.