

FAO/OIE GLOBAL CONFERENCE on Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control

Recently, FAO and OIE organized an important conference on Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control that took place in Bangkok, Thailand from the 26th to the 29th June. Some 400 people attended from all over the world including representatives of Afghanistan. The Afghan representatives came from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (3), the Afghan Veterinary Association (2), and the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (the Country Programme Director).

FMD is a highly contagious disease of global importance. The estimated annual impact in terms of production losses and vaccination costs alone are in the region of US\$ 5 billion.

The disease is endemic in Afghanistan, and results from a recent economic survey, showing the impact of FMD in the country, will shortly be published by FAO. This survey was facilitated through DCA, and selected Veterinary Field Units (VFUs). It will capture the impact on production, and the effect on direct and indirect losses.

Two very important tools, the PVS (Performance of Veterinary Services), and the PCP (Progressive Control Pathway) were indicated as vital components of an overall strategy for the control of the disease.

In Afghanistan work has already commenced on the Sanitary Mandate Contracting Scheme (SMC) and disease surveillance is now performed through the VFU network in 14 selected Provinces. This SMC is a very important scheme supported fully by DCA, and is already showing signs of success.

The conclusion reached for the overall strategy of FMD control is composed of three components: 1) Improving Global FMD control 2) Strengthening Veterinary Services and 3) Improving the Prevention and Control of other major livestock diseases.