Office of Emergency Management
Monroe County, New York

Responding to the Threat of Foot & Mouth Disease

A Hazard-Specific Appendix to the

Monroe County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

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RESPONDING TO THE THREAT OF FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE

Revision Log

Date	Description of Revision	Date Revised	Date Distributed
10.12.01	Date Approved by the County Executive		
8.29.07	NIMS Review and housekeeping		
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INTRODUCTION

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and deer. While FMD is not always fatal, it leads to severe losses in the production of meat, milk and fiber production.

Outbreaks of FMD in Europe, South America and Saudi Arabia have led to increased concern about the spread of this disease to the United States. Although the United States has not experienced an FMD outbreak since 1929, the disease spreads rapidly and the risk of contamination is extremely high. One hundred percent of the animals exposed to the disease will become infected with the disease.

It is very difficult to generate a reliable estimate of the probability that FMD will spread to the United States. While the risk of contamination has been reduced as a result of restrictions on the importation of animals and animal products, increases in international trade and travel might make the risk of an outbreak more likely.

FMD poses no health risk for humans, although humans and animals can spread the disease. It can be spread from farm to farm by vehicles that come in contact with contaminated soil, hay or foodstuffs or by contaminated meat, water or animal products. The virus can also be carried up to four hundred miles through the air.

If an outbreak occurred in our region, it would have a severe impact on the local economy. An FMD outbreak would lead to state quarantine of affected farms, the restriction of movement in the areas around farms, and the potential destruction of affected and potentially exposed animals. As experiences in Britain demonstrate, the economic, social and psychological impact of FMD should not be underestimated.

In response to these concerns, the County Executive convened a Task Force to investigate how the County could reduce the risk of FMD and improve emergency response efforts in the event of an outbreak.

This plan has been developed and coordinated with the cooperation of County Public Health Officials, emergency service providers, NYS agencies, and representatives of the agricultural community.

MISSION

The mission of this Plan is to establish procedures to address issues concerning FMD:

- To consider steps to reduce the risk of an FMD outbreak in Monroe County and to improve the effectiveness of our local response in the event of an outbreak.

- To identify resources and coordinate the efforts of local, state and federal officials, and agriculture professionals.

AUTHORITY

Authority for this plan is contained in NYS Executive Law, Article 2-B., "State & Local Natural and Man-Made Disaster Preparedness." This plan is integrated as an hazard-specific appendix within the *Monroe County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. FMD is an extremely contagious animal disease. A pro-active approach is needed to contain it and to control its spread.

    - FMD spreads very quickly. In the event of an outbreak there would be little time, after the fact, to adequately prepare a local response.

    - Preventive measures at the County level could reduce the likelihood of an outbreak and could help minimize the spread of the disease in the critical hours after it is first identified.

    - Some combination of voluntary and mandatory bio-security measures may be necessary to prevent the disease and control its spread.

2. Although the probability of an FMD outbreak in Monroe County is not known, there are a number of local factors that could potentially increase our risk.

    - The New York Agricultural Statistics Service estimates that in the year 2000 there were as many as 8,000 cows (3,000 of which were producing dairy cows) and 1,300 horses in Monroe County. While the population of cows and horses may not be large relative to other counties in the state, the potential for animal to animal (and human to animal) contamination clearly exists.

    - There are a number of fixed facilities like the Zoo, Springdale Farm, the Monroe County Fairgrounds, and Lollypop Farm where human to animal and animal to animal interaction occurs.

    - Each year, there are a number of special events in Monroe County that have the potential for FMD contamination. Some of these events, like circuses and breeding shows, involve animals directly. Others bring in visitors, including international visitors, who may have come in contact with the disease.

    - There are a number of major transportation thoroughfares within Monroe County, including an international airport, rail station, bus station and interstate highway system, increasing the potential for the spread of the disease by humans or the transportation of infected animals.

3. If an FMD outbreak occurs, and spreads, its impact on the Monroe County economy would be significant.

- FMD would severely damage our local agriculture industry, which generates annual sales of approximately $48 million. A local outbreak would restrict commerce and movement in many farm areas, reducing access to labor, machinery and markets. Monroe County's dairy farms – which are responsible for about 13% of total agricultural sales – would be particularly hard hit. Local production facilities supported by Monroe County farmers, including two local dairy production facilities, would also be negatively impacted.

- The economic impact of FMD would reach far beyond the agriculture industry. Agriculture-affiliated commerce would be interrupted, public mobility would be disrupted and the local food supply diminished. An FMD outbreak would have a negative effect on local tourism and other commercial activity in Monroe County.

ORGANIZATION

Federal and state agencies, including the USDA, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and MCC's Agriculture & Life Sciences Institute have already launched efforts to raise public awareness and to encourage agriculture producers to implement bio-security measures. These efforts aim to mitigate the risk of several animal-borne diseases, including FMD, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease), Rabies and West Nile Virus. Monroe County can build on this effort by using County resources to promote local public awareness of these diseases. In addition, the County can encourage bio-security measures at private locations and consider a mixture of voluntary and mandatory preventive steps at County-owned and County-funded facilities.

Federal and state emergency plans make it clear that local Emergency Management officials will be actively involved in any response to a local or regional outbreak. Local resources will be used to implement important elements of the federal and state response to FMD. Monroe County can take steps in advance to identify local resources and improve coordination with local agencies and municipalities.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. If there is a reported or confirmed case of FMD outside of the United States:

Monroe County could reduce the risk of an FMD outbreak through a combination of initiatives designed to (a) identify high-risk locations within the County; (b) coordinate local response efforts; (c) educate the public; and, (d) implement bio-security measures.

a. Identify and map high-risk locations, e.g. fixed facilities, special event and seasonal event venues with animal exhibits where human to animal, or animal to animal interaction is likely.

b. Develop a protocol for the 911 Center to ensure that requests for information, reported cases and threats regarding FMD are properly addressed.

c. Direct all media inquiries regarding FMD to the Monroe County Department of Communications & Special Events and the MCC Agriculture & Life Sciences Institute.

d. Educate the public: through signage with preventive recommendations at venues where human to animal contact occurs; through a County brochure, the County website, and news releases; and, through local corporations and business organizations to reach frequent, local international travelers.

e. Utilize existing County permitting processes to disseminate information and institute preventative measures at special events that include animal exhibits, e.g. Health Department Food Permits.

f. Recommend that international travelers take steps to avoid going to agricultural areas or coming in direct contact with susceptible animal populations.

g. Develop appropriate decontamination procedures for personnel and equipment.

h. Continuously review bio-security recommendations from academic and professional sources such as Cornell University, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Division of Animal Industry, the USDA and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Centers for Disease Control and other public and private organizations.

B. **If there is a reported or confirmed case of FMD within the United States, regionally (within 400 miles) or locally (within the County):**

- Agencies, such as USDA, the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), the State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the MCC Agriculture & Life Sciences Institute may institute mandatory activities that impact local public and private-sector operations.

- More intense public education efforts will be necessary. The County should increase public education and outreach efforts through news releases, the distribution of printed materials and public service announcements on radio and television.

- Tighter bio-security measures will also be necessary. At this stage, the County's previously implemented voluntary risk-reduction measures should be reviewed for consideration as mandatory activities.

In the event of an outbreak in Monroe County, the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets would be the lead agencies directing efforts to contain the disease. The operational guidelines for these agencies have been outlined in the following documents:

- *The United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: National Emergency Response to a Highly Contagious Animal Disease.*

- *The New York State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan: Annex for Emerging Infectious Diseases in Non-Human Populations.*

C. Recovery.

Recovery immediately follows emergency response. It involves direction to restore the community to normal conditions.

The response to an outbreak of a disease that impacts the agricultural community may be short-lived, or could extend for some period of time. Emergency response activities may include control measures that have been rapidly employed, and may result in a slow demobilization of response agencies and activities.

Recovery activities may include:

a. Maintaining access control
b. Adjusting traffic control perimeters
c. Maintaining security in restricted areas
d. Clearing debris
e. Continuing public information
f. Requesting a Presidential Disaster Declaration
g. Surveillance and assessment of eradication activities

SUMMARY

Outbreaks of FMD raise concerns about the potential spread of this disease to the United States. Given the nature of the disease, its potential adverse impact on our economy, and the existence of local factors that raise the potential for contamination, it is prudent to take a proactive approach to FMD.

Monroe County should take action to raise public awareness and increase bio-security at locations where animal to animal or human to animal contact might occur. Monroe County public safety and emergency management protocols should facilitate effective response to threats posed by FMD and other animal diseases.