

The Organic Movement and the 2001 UK FMD Outbreak

The Outbreak was characterised by:

- **Inadequate and mistaken initial response**
- **Mistaken diagnosis**
- **Scientific and political intrigue**
- **Failure to tackle the 'real' epidemic**
- **Battle over vaccination**
- **Legal challenges**
- **No coherent 'organic movement' response**



The Dynamic of the Outbreak - Timescale

First case confirmed	20th February 2001
Peaked at 299 confirmed cases per week	27th March
Dropping to 77 confirmed cases per week	24th April
Tailing off to around 25 cases per week	May to July
Last cases - 4 -	25th September
North and West of England; South of Scotland; Parts of Wales	



The Dynamic of the Outbreak – Affected Premises

Infected Premises	2026
(possibly up to 1/3 not confirmed by subsequent lab tests)	
Dangerous Contacts	4762
Contiguous Premises	3369
	<hr/>
	10,157



The Dynamic of the Outbreak – Slaughter

	IP*	DC	3k Cull	Suspected	Welfare
SHEEP	968,000	991,000	1,360,000	109,000	1,821,000
CATTLE	301,000	198,000	82,000	13,000	166,000
PIGS	22,000	50,000	68,000	3,000	308,000
TOTAL	6,456,000				
Plus	4,000 other animals (deer, goats) for control				
	3,000 other animals under Livestock Welfare Scheme				
	Possibly 1.2 million suckling lambs				



Inadequate and Mistaken Initial Response

- **No meaningful contingency plans**
- **Delay in identifying the first outbreak**
- **Further delay in imposing a movement ban**
- **Lack of rigour in implementation of movement ban**
- **Poor logistical planning and implementation**



Mistaken Diagnosis

- **In the field**
- **Delays in lab analysis and interpretation**
- **Erroneous information put into the models**



What it Cost

Compensation and other payments to farmers	£1.4 billion
Direct eradication and control costs	£1.3 billion
Other public sector costs	£0.3 billion
Agriculture, food chain and supporting industries	£0.6 billion
Tourism and supporting industries (lost revenue)	£5.4 billion
GDP impact – approx	£2.0 billion
Approx TOTAL	£11.0 BILLION



Scientific and Political Intrigue

- **Between modellers and vets**
- **Science Group and MAFF**
- **Disingenuity from IAH Pirbright**
- **Political panic re election**
- **Misinformation over vaccination**
- **NFU agenda**
- **Conflicting response from farmers**



The 'Real' Epidemic not Fought

- Type O not effectively spread by wind
- One primary source
- Movement ban and isolation effective
- Especially if aided by ring vaccination
- 1968: 2364 cases; 2001: 2026 cases
- 1968: 442,000 slaughtered; 2001: 6.5 million plus
- 1968: windspread; 2001: movements and people



Vaccination

- **‘New’ vaccines were safe and effective**
- **Not acknowledged by MAFF nor Pirbright**
- **Misinformation to prevent demand for use**
- **Refusal/delay in validating ‘farm’ tests**
- **Refusal to press OIE on ‘vaccinate and live’**
- **Limited stocks in country**
- **Some organic organisations led pro-vaccination campaign**



Legal Challenges

- **Kindersley judicial review**
- **Injunctions to prevent cull**
- **Illegality of cull**
- **Bullying and intimidation**
- **Animal Health Act**



‘Organic Movement’ Response

- **No organic movement**
- **Conflicting interest groups**
- **No unified position or attempt to get one**
- **No help from ‘organic’ vets in UK or Europe**
- **Some proposals for homoeopathy trials**
- **Some ‘illegal’ use of homoeopathy**
- **No evidence of effect**
- **Many organic farmers sought to protect livestock**
- **Some did not**
- **Support from vaccination from some organic bodies**



EFRC's Role

- **Organic theory/Howard's anecdotes unhelpful**
- **Issued position statement**
- **First to act against slaughter**
- **Judicial Review over failure to vaccinate**
- **Support from Prime Minister for vaccination**
- **Misleading meetings**
- **Developed case for vaccination**
- **Legal team activated**
- **Websites (36,000 hits per day)**
- **Telephone helpline**
- **Launched campaign for Public Inquiry**



EFRC Position

- **Rigorously enforced movement ban and biosecurity**
- **Letting disease run its course in mildly affected sheep in remote areas and limited contact**
- **Slaughter only affected animals on welfare grounds**
- **Strategic use of vaccines**
- **Use epidemic to test homoeopathy**
- **Only pushed**
 - **biosecurity**
 - **vaccination**



EFRC Position

- **Was it justifiable then?**
- **Is it valid?**
- **What else is there?**

