

Transport of livestock animals, meat now allowed

Written by DA-AFIS

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Livestock farmers, traders and processors can now freely transport their animals and meat products within the country, as long as appropriate permits are secured from concerned agencies of the Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said this is one of the favorable results of the recent recognition and declaration of the entire Philippines as free from foot and mouth disease (FMD) without vaccination by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) or World Organization for Animal Health, on May 26, 2011.

Secretary Alcala recently signed Administrative Order (AO) No. 19, August 2, 2011, lifting all FMD-related transport restrictions for swine, cattle, carabao, sheep, goats, and other cloven-footed animals, including their meat, meat products, and other by-products nationwide.

However, he urged livestock farmers, processors and traders to remain vigilant to maintain the FMD-free status of the country. In fact, under AO 19, the DA and its concerned livestock agencies in partnership with livestock farmers and industry stakeholders will continue to implement an FMD monitoring and preventive plan, maintain a stock of FMD vaccines, and ensure that requirements are complied with prior to transport of animals, their meat, meat products, and other by-products.

As a requirement, farmers and traders wanting to transport live animals should first secure a written authority or permit from the director of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) or his duly authorized representative. The BAI will also issue a veterinary health certificate to attest that the animals are healthy and come from areas free of any outbreak or disease.

Meanwhile, processors and traders are required to secure a certificate of meat inspection from the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) when they intend to transport meat and meat products,

Secretary Alcala enjoins BAI veterinary quarantine officers and regional and local

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government veterinarians to submit a monthly report on any positive or negative disease incidence in their respective areas.

In case of an FMD resurgence, the DA through the BAI and other concerned agencies and livestock owners should stamp out or isolate all infected animals, and vaccinate other exposed susceptible animals. The DA will also institute a 'ring certification' and impose strict quarantine rules within a three-kilometer radius, depending on the scale of the outbreak.

Finally, the DA through the BAI will maintain a yearly stock of at least 2,000 bottles or about 100,000 doses of FMD vaccines which could be readily used in case of resurgence.

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