

thing without knowing *anything*. We Russians don't like people who just blabber around, like Gorbachov. I believe that Putin is serious about improving the economic situation. He wants necessary interventions by the state in order to build up infrastructure and industry, the productive sector in general. That is an economic concept totally different than that of communist planning. This aspect of Putin's program is definitely not liked by the liberals, because they don't want the state to control or regulate anything.

EIR: Putin wants a mixed economy, with as many necessary interventions by the state in the field of infrastructure, energy, etc. as needed, and as much freedom for productive private enterprise as possible?

Koryagina: Yes, pretty much like what we see in China right now. Our institute has developed a program to establish a two-tiered economy, where the state cares for all those activities that are important for our people not only to survive, but to live a decent life and develop themselves, and their children. That means, that the state regulates everything which is decisive for the development of the whole country and the whole population, in terms of strategic industries, infrastructure, and energy, as well as health care, education, pensions, etc., and leaves the rest to private enterprise.

EIR: That brings us, in conclusion, naturally, to the present energy crisis in California. What is your comment on that?

Koryagina: The people in California got exactly what we Russians got from the liberals like [Anatoli] Chubais. That is not only what our people think, but this is even openly talked about in our newspapers. I hope the Americans will draw the appropriate lessons for themselves.

EIR: Would you, finally, like to say something about what the Western governments should do right now, to help Russia to succeed?

Koryagina: At this moment, it is very important, that the foreign states support our Interior Ministry and prosecutors in their attempt to find the Russian flight capital and confiscate it, so that at least some of it can be used to pay our foreign debt. If one really tried to get the Russian flight capital, one could find at least \$100 billion very easily. To be clear: We do not propose to simply confiscate this money, which was stolen from the Russian people in the first place, but that it be done strictly according to established legal standards. Gusinsky and Berezovsky have the right to hire good lawyers—they certainly have the money to do so—and then our government can argue its case in court.

Ultimately, success in radically changing our economic situation for the better depends entirely on breaking the power of the financial oligarchy and organized crime, which operates, as you well know, internationally. That is the key to solve our problems in Russia.

Hoof-and-Mouth Brings Dark Age to Europe

by Rosa Tennenbaum

That the much-feared hoof-and-mouth disease (HMD) broke out in Great Britain, is probably not more than an unhappy coincidence; any other European country could have been hit just as well. But the way the country is handling the crisis, was, until recently, uniquely British: the method of the Middle Ages, as if a vaccine had never been developed.

The whole countryside is closed down. In areas where HMD has been raging, things are at a standstill. Any movement of people, animals, or goods is forbidden, or permitted only under official supervision. Children are not allowed to go to school, nor women to shop, nor the whole family to go to church on Sunday. The epidemic guards and the killing squads are the only ones allowed into the disinfection areas. If their gruesome task is carried out, all cloven-hoof animals are killed, and the pyres burn; silence descends upon the area. The farmer and his family are left alone; the only animals they keep, is their dog or their cat.

These images suggest that the Black Death is reappearing, but this is not the case. HMD is very infectious for cattle, but it does not harm humans. It is not even deadly for animals, in most cases. Two weeks after the animal comes down with the illness, which causes fever and blisters on the mouth and the hooves, it generally recovers. Older animals rarely die, but among young ones the death rate is 50-70%. After the animal recovers, its productivity is significantly lowered. Meat and milk can be consumed without any risk, as the virus does not affect people.

What makes HMD dangerous, is that the virus is extremely infectious. Infected animals pass it on, but the agent, sticking to clothes, shoes, suitcases, and tires, is spread mainly by human movement; it can easily bridge continents. Wild animals and migrating birds can also spread it. The efforts of British officials to gain control of the disease by extreme epidemiological measures will inevitably end in failure, because of the very nature of the epidemic. Despite that, British Prime Minister Tony Blair's government is holding tooth and nail to this strategy.

History of HMD in Britain

Hoof-and-mouth disease has been known since ancient times. In Europe, it is documented as having existed since the 18th Century. It has regularly broken out, and farmers

have fought the disease by restricting movements and closing animal markets temporarily.

In Britain, the history of HMD started in 1839. The disease was endemic throughout the 19th Century, with hundreds of small outbreaks. At the turn of the 20th Century, a group of extremely wealthy farmers, generally noblemen, started to press for eliminating the virus. They wanted to protect their valuable pedigreed animals, since recovered animals showed lower productivity, and therefore were unfit for breeding. These farmers suffered higher losses by HMD than normal farmers with their herds.

These wealthy farmers lobbied for the idea of eradicating the disease, and making the country disease-free. In 1910, the new policy was introduced: When HMD broke out, the whole herd was culled and burned, and the region was put under quarantine. As long as the outbreaks were small, this measure was reasonable and accepted. In the first big epidemic of the 20th Century (1922-24), 250,000 animals were culled, a huge number at that time. Killing squads often arrived on the farms after animals had already recovered, and farmers had to watch their healthy cattle being killed. Protests of angry farmers were suppressed by the government, which accused them of spreading the disease.

In the 1950s, a vaccine against HMD was developed, and widely used on the continent to stop, and later to eradicate the epidemic. Epidemics could now be put on hold within a short time. Not so in Britain. There, the use of vaccine was not considered. In the late 1950s, the government started to block imports from countries that vaccinated their cattle.

During the last big epidemic of 1967-68, the disease went out of control, despite the culling of hundreds of thousands of animals. A vaccination plan was drafted, but the high-point had passed, and cases went down. Again, Britain had handled HMD without using the vaccine—at the cost of 450,000 animals.

Abigail Woods, who researched this history of HMD at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of Manchester, points to the role London played to force through its method of handling HMD internationally. Other countries followed the British example, and demanded, from their importing partners, proof that imported animals were “free of HMD without vaccination.” This continues today. It has been *economic* interests from the very beginning, that made state control of the epidemic a precondition. At the head of this movement was (and is) Great Britain.

After the crisis of 1967 was survived without using the vaccine, British officials started to lobby massively in the European Union (EU) for their policy. In continental Europe, HMD was eradicated by regular vaccination in the 1960s and 1970s. When Denmark joined the EU, things changed. Denmark traditionally exported large amounts of meat to the United States and Japan, and both countries made the renunciation of vaccination mandatory for meat imports. In addition,

the European-wide policy of handling illnesses had to be harmonized, with the introduction of the European “single market” in 1992. And, despite the fact that HMD was for many years no longer a problem, thanks to vaccination, vaccination was abandoned.

The Epidemic Returns

In the age of globalization, with virtually unhindered traffic of people and goods, it was only a question of time before the epidemic would return. In Great Britain, more than 300,000 animals were killed within the first three weeks of the current epidemic, but the number of daily outbreaks is still rising. In desperation, London decided to do by culling, what others do by vaccination: In a radius of two miles around outbreaks, all animals are to be killed and burned. “Slaughter on suspicion,” Agriculture Minister Nick Brown calls this program. One million animals, including healthy animals, as the minister himself admits, will be killed, rather than vaccinated, just because they are cloven-hoof animals. In Scotland, 200,000 sheep will be culled. Whole regions will be transformed into livestock-free zones. The county of Cumbria, for instance, will lose all its livestock.

Up until now, there was hardly any questioning of the way London was handling the crisis. But, when Nick Brown announced the 1 million mass-culling, there was an outcry, not only from farmers, but also from veterinarians and others. The killing squads are already stretched thin, even with Army help. It takes seven days, on average, to kill an infected herd, and another six to seven days to burn the carcasses. These are decomposing in the fields, attracting foxes and birds, which spread the disease to rats and deer. It is truly a nightmare.

“This isn’t even medieval; it is the Dark Ages,” the London *Sunday Times* commented on March 18. In Cumbria, farmers and their veterinarians are refusing to collaborate, and say they will not surrender their livestock, as long as there are no signs of HMD. “Stop this brutal slaughter now, and give us the vaccine,” Mark H. Brown demanded in the *Times* on March 17. He accused the ministry of “blindly following a policy developed in the 1920s. But times have changed. . . . So why are we not using the vaccine? Fifty million doses are available.”

Jonathan Miller attacked the policy of the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries (MAFF) in the *Sunday Times* of March 18: “Arguing with these people [on vaccination] is akin to disputing theology with the Inquisition. The British farm establishment . . . does not deviate from this line. . . . MAFF has persuaded the European Union to develop a faultless strategy for creating havoc. First, deny vaccination so the European herd is vulnerable. Then (by closing abattoirs, increasing animal travel) increase the risk that the herd will be infected. When the virus appears, impose a chaotic, primitive slaughter. . . . Massively disrupt the life of the countryside

(and now much of the continent), inconveniencing millions with arbitrary and meaningless restrictions. When it is all over, get ready to go through it all again because the herd is still unvaccinated and just as vulnerable as ever. God forbid the eco-terrorists catch on to how easy this is: apparently one could close down the entire EU armed with nothing more than a ham sandwich and a list of petting farms.”

Enormous Economic Damage

The Centre for Economics and Business Research calculated the economic losses, caused by HMD to £9 billion (\$18 billion) plus £3 billion in lower tax revenues. The biggest impact will be on tourism, with £7.9 billion, according to this study, but the losses in agriculture were already estimated to run at £3 billion. For comparison: Britain’s total meat exports are £400 million, and live animals exports account for £42 million per year.

Pressure is mounting. The Elm Farm Research Centre, a leading organic farming charity, prepared a legal case against the government. They want a public examination of the arguments for and against vaccination. The challenge was written by Britain’s most prominent veterinarians, who said that the ministry’s mass-culling policy is “scientifically mistaken, helps to spread the disease, is agriculturally and economically suicidal, and could be illegal under European law.”

It proposes immediate emergency vaccinations which could “enormously” reduce the risk of airborne and vehicular spread of the diseases to unaffected areas and would increase public confidence. “It is also ethically and politically acceptable, a rational response to an exceptionally infective condition, and which has a very rapid response. It could result in near 100% vaccination rates within five days and almost complete immunity in ten days. A reduction to zero could be expected within three weeks.”

Veterinary experts expect that the high-point of the HMD crisis will not be reached before the beginning of May, and say that it will not decline noticeably before August. That is an indirect indictment of the British government’s policy. The epidemic cannot be eradicated in an area with a high animal density, as is the case everywhere in Europe, unless you eradicate the whole herd along with it.

A Threat to All of Europe

The incompetence in London is threatening agriculture in all of Europe. The virus is spreading freely, and has already travelled to Ireland (one case), France (one case), and the Netherlands (two cases). It will certainly spread further; it is only a question of time, when it will hit, and where. It hit the northeastern part of the Netherlands, which is only 30 miles from Germany. This could lead to the much-feared “melt-down,” because this region has one of the highest animal densities in the world. The Dutch government immediately

appealed for a vaccination program at the European Commission in Brussels, but the EC declined it.

Is all of Europe heading in the British direction? Whole regions in Ireland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany already look like it. Wide areas are sealed off; smaller roads have been barricaded; larger ones are being blocked and controlled by police. Any movement needs official permission, and is being surveilled. National borders inside the EU have been re-erected. The only thing lacking is the pyres. “We do not want to have circumstances like in the Middle Ages, like in Great Britain, now,” the Dutch Agriculture Minister said, in criticizing the European Commission’s neglect. “We will not put up pyres. If our capacities to destroy the cattle in the slaughterhouses do not suffice, we will start vaccination.”

Such a fight against using the vaccine might be understandable in countries where animal density is lower, such as in the Americas. But in Europe, and in this region in particular, it is suicidal, and it is completely out of question that HMD could be stamped out in any other way. Immediately after the outbreak in Great Britain, the Association of German Veterinarians warned that if HMD comes to the continent, the whole cloven-hoof population in Central Europe will be threatened with extinction, and they demanded preventive immunization. Now, that has happened.

This is not the first epidemic Europe has experienced; the last big one was just 30 years ago. The vaccine worked magnificently in the 1960s and ’70s. The disease was brought to a standstill within several days. And vaccination is cheap: One dose costs around \$1, plus the costs for the veterinarian, which is the bigger part. During the past 20 years, the vaccine has been greatly improved. Immunity starts after four days, is completed after 21 days, and lasts for 12 months. The exact variant of the virus raging in Europe right now is clearly identified. The fact that vaccinated animals could carry the virus for up to six months, does not play any role in an immunized herd. And Europe was already cut off from world trade, anyway, when the first country had registered one single case.

So, what is Europe waiting for? This crisis demonstrates that supranational institutions such as the EU bureaucracy are incapable of acting rationally in a crisis. It shows again the enormous power London — which controls the EU Council of Veterinarians and the Office for Animal Health — exerts in Brussels, just as in the case of “Mad Cow” disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE), where London prevented any measures, even examination for years. Globalization brought us the return of this dangerous epidemic, and supranational institutions, such as the EU, have prevented it from being responded to effectively. It just goes to show that only the nation-state is able to safeguard the well-being of its population. This is now proven true, even for animals.