

Milestone for Brazil: Declared free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease without vaccination

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Brazil has been officially declared free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) without the use of vaccination, marking a historic milestone for its livestock industry. The announcement was made during the 92nd General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), held in Paris. The recognition applies to Brazil's entire territory, solidifying its status as a leading global player in animal health and meat exports.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Agriculture and Livestock Minister Carlos Fávaro were present at the June 6 certification ceremony, where Brazil, alongside Bolivia, was formally recognised as FMD-free without vaccination. The certification, awarded by WOAH—an international standard-setting body operating under the World Trade Organization—underscores Brazil's success in eradicating a highly contagious viral disease that has long posed a threat to global livestock systems.

With over 234 million head of cattle, Brazil's achievement is regarded as a breakthrough in veterinary science and public policy. Officials say the recognition will significantly enhance Brazil's access to high-value international markets, expand export opportunities, and bolster confidence among trading partners. It is also expected to drive sustainable development, support economic growth, and contribute to global food security.

The milestone follows years of strategic planning and implementation by Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock under the National Foot-and-Mouth Disease Surveillance Program. Developed in collaboration with state governments and the livestock sector, the program included extensive modernisation of veterinary services, advanced disease monitoring systems, and a gradual transition from vaccination zones to zones certified free of the disease without vaccination.

A cornerstone of the effort was the expansion of veterinary service coverage to more than 85 per cent of Brazilian municipalities, including remote and hard-to-reach regions. These efforts ensured robust disease prevention and early detection mechanisms, key requirements for WOA certification.

Foot-and-mouth disease is a severe and fast-spreading illness affecting cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats. It leads to fever, blisters, and lameness, with significant economic consequences through reduced meat and milk production and trade limitations. Historically, vaccination has been the primary defense against FMD, making Brazil's achievement without it especially noteworthy.

WOA's recognition is not only a boost for Brazil's trade ambitions but also a validation of its commitment to science-based livestock management. The move is expected to inspire other nations aiming to transition to vaccine-free disease control models, while strengthening local economies and protecting rural livelihoods across Brazil.