Preventing foreign disease outbreaks in cattle, other livestock, and poultry requires cooperation by all who import animals or unsterilized animal products from affected countries. Prevention also requires that no one brings or sends prohibited animal products or prohibited souvenirs into the United States.

Failure to comply with Federal animal import laws could have devastating consequences for producers and consumers. Violators may be prosecuted, fined, and even imprisoned.

Information on animal import regulations may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s veterinarian-in-charge for each State, or by contacting the USDA Import-Export Staff in Hyattsville, Md.

Traveler’s Tips
Travelers planning to enter or re-enter the United States from foreign countries should familiarize themselves with the information in a valuable little booklet titled “Traveler’s Tips.” This booklet can be obtained free by writing toAPHIS Information, 732 Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Federal laws aimed at foreign animal disease prevention are enforced through an inspection network that includes the U.S. Customs Service and USDA.

Working around the clock at ports, airports and border crossings, USDA inspectors examined 306,000 airplanes, 51,000 oceangoing vessels, 60 million motor vehicles from Mexico, 128 million pieces of passenger luggage, and

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178,000 mailed packages of agricultural interest in 1983. From this, they seized and destroyed 274,000 unauthorized animal products.

Despite these and other preventive actions, foreign animal diseases sometimes have reached the United States.

For example, exotic Newcastle disease has entered by way of smuggled pet birds each year since 1971, except 1976. Each entry was followed by prompt diagnosis and eradication, without reaching domestic poultry. However, a 1971 outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease in Southern California poultry cost $56 million to eradicate.

More recently, in 1983, type 2 bluetongue disease was discovered in some Florida cattle.

What should the animal owner do when a foreign disease is suspected?

First, promptly call a qualified, licensed veterinarian or, if one is not available, call the State or Federal Veterinarian, and request a diagnosis.

Since many serious foreign diseases resemble less
serious domestic ones, a final diagnosis often requires laboratory testing of appropriate specimens.

Specially trained foreign animal disease diagnosticians are available throughout the country to make followup examinations and collect the proper specimens, as soon as the State or Federal veterinarian decides that the suspected disease may be foreign. As one can readily appreciate, the animal owner, veterinarian, and diagnostic laboratory are our first line of defense against a foreign disease that has entered the country.

**Some Precautions**
- Avoid moving any animals, animal products, feed, or bedding from the premises when a contagious disease is present
- If a foreign disease is suspected, do not move sick or dead animals to a laboratory
- Instead, have the proper specimens collected and submitted by a qualified, trained veterinarian
- Do not permit service representatives, friends, neighbors, or others to visit the suspected animals, and avoid any other activity whereby the disease agent might be accidentally carried away to infect additional herds.

The National emergency 24-hour telephone number for reporting suspected foreign animal diseases is area code 301, 436-8092.

**What happens when a foreign animal disease is confirmed by a Federal laboratory?**
The Secretary of Agriculture is promptly advised of the situation by the chief veterinary officer of the United States. The Secretary may then declare a National animal disease emergency if the seriousness of the situation justifies such action.

With an official emergency declaration, special funds and personnel can be made available immediately to combat the disease outbreak. Disease eradication operations include industry and State representatives in federally operated Regional Emergency Animal Disease Eradication Organizations (READEO’s).

In years when there are no actual outbreaks of emergency animal diseases, the READEO managers and technical specialists maintain emergency preparedness by simulating outbreaks in national test exercises.