

# *Foot-and-Mouth Disease Eradicated in Ecuador, Boosting Exports*

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Quito, March 3 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The World Organization for Animal Health has announced that Ecuador has successfully eradicated foot-and-mouth disease.

The government-sponsored Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Project, which began in 2011, has effectively wiped out the disease, which has existed in Ecuador since 1943, which means the export ban of Ecuadorean beef and dairy products can be lifted.

Prior to 2011, approximately half of Ecuador's 4.65 million cattle were vaccinated. Today, 98 percent have been vaccinated as part of the eradication plan. As well as vaccination programs, the scheme successfully pushed forward technological development and laboratories, and has created jobs for technicians and some 300 veterinarians to work in the field and in educational initiatives.

The \$86 million project was considered a priority and seen as part of a process of economic diversification and exports expansion.

The General Manager of Livestock Association of East and Highlands, Juan Pablo Grijalva, said cattle production is "growing at a very fast rate, because there are policies that were established by the government with the private sector."

The General Coordinator of Animal Sanitation of Agrocalidad, Dr. Javier Vargas, explained that the increase in production will allow Ecuador to open international markets.

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