

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001217/26
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(24 March 2026)**

Subject: Emergency support for livestock farmers in Lesvos following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and restrictive measures

The recent confirmation of a case of foot-and-mouth disease on a livestock farm in Lesvos, for the first time in many years in Greece, has led to the imposition of strict restrictive measures on the island, with serious repercussions on the primary sector.

Specifically, bans on the movement of animals and livestock products outside the island have entered into force and milk collection and the sale of meat have been suspended. This situation is affecting thousands of livestock farmers and is threatening the economic viability of one of Lesvos' most important production sectors.

The crisis is all the more serious given that it coincides with the run-up to Easter, when a large part of lamb and goat production is intended for sale to consumers.

Given that animal diseases are a matter that concerns the whole of Europe and that the way in which they are dealt with has a direct effect on the rural economy and the security of the food supply chain, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What emergency financial tools does it intend to deploy to support the livestock farmers in Lesvos who are affected by the foot-and-mouth disease restrictions?
2. Is it possible to deploy the common agricultural policy's reserve for crises in the agricultural sector, to provide direct financial support to affected producers?
3. How does it intend to support Member States in preventing and responding to animal diseases so as to avoid such crises leading to the collapse of entire local economies, and will it consider specific support measures for EU island regions affected by such health crises in the primary sector?

Submitted: 24.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(27 May 2026)**

EU co-financing of emergency veterinary measures is available under the Single Market Programme ⁽¹⁾ for diseases such as foot and mouth disease (FMD).

This includes eligible costs related to compensating the owners the culling of their animals on affected farms and cleaning and disinfecting the affected premises ⁽²⁾.

The Commission is ready to immediately activate the EU FMD antigen bank and to ship vaccines doses to Greece as soon as requested by the Greek Competent Authorities to launch emergency vaccination.

At the request of the Member State concerned, the Commission may adopt exceptional support measures for market losses linked to restrictions imposed to curb disease spread.

In addition, under the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans Regulation ⁽³⁾, Member States may support investments in restoration of agricultural production potential following animal disease outbreaks, and may amend their Plans to introduce crisis payments for farmers affected by animal diseases.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/690 (OJ L 153, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/690/oj>).

⁽²⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c1ed1748-1b55-4e7b-add0-b7eb41c65a3e_en?filename=cff_animal_emergency-measures_ah-ms-guidelines.pdf.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 (OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, pp. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115/oj>).

The EU legal framework, in particular Regulation (EU) 2016/429⁽⁴⁾ and Commission Delegated Regulations (EU) 2020/687⁽⁵⁾ and 2020/689⁽⁶⁾, provides for harmonised measures for rapid eradication of Category A diseases such as FMD, combining culling operations and, where appropriate, the use of vaccination⁽⁷⁾. Movement restrictions for Lesvos were immediately established⁽⁸⁾ following the confirmation of the FMD outbreak.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, pp. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>).

⁽⁵⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 (OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, pp. 64–, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/687/oj).

⁽⁶⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 (OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, pp. 211–340, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/689/oj).

⁽⁷⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/diseases-and-control-measures/foot-and-mouth-disease_en.

⁽⁸⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2026/732 (OJ L, 2026/732, 24.3.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2026/732/oj).