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### **Foot and Mouth Disease: RBST Action**

Following the announcement of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Surrey on Thursday, RBST took immediate action on behalf of endangered breeds. RBST staff responded spontaneously to the crisis and are manning RBST telephones at the office to give advice and support to members. Members of RBST Council also have made themselves available to assist the staff at this time of crisis.

RBST has worked in conjunction with Defra since 2001 to compile a 'Breeds at Risk Register' in order to identify those breeding units which it is important to protect in the event of a slaughter policy being applied. Richard Clarke, RBST Chief Executive, was "very encouraged to see Defra's rapid response and hopeful that cooperation between Defra and RBST could prevent the slaughter of livestock of great genetic importance". It will be a priority for RBST to ensure that vaccination is used effectively to control the outbreak if it is not contained.

Lawrence Alderson, Chairman of RBST, said "Several native endangered breeds suffered serious losses in the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in 2001 and we are determined to avoid a repetition of that disaster. We are taking all possible measures to protect our native breeds, especially those that are low in numbers and those that are concentrated in a small geographical area."

For further information please contact Dr Dawn Teverson, RBST Conservation Officer on 024 7669 8767 or by email [dawn.teverson@rbst.org.uk](mailto:dawn.teverson@rbst.org.uk)

#### **Ends**

Notes for editor

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) is a charity established in 1973. It works to conserve more than 70 breeds of native farm livestock. The charity is funded by membership subscriptions, donations and legacies.

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