



# A Manufactured Plague: The History of Foot-and-mouth Disease in Britain

*Abigail Woods*

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Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is currently regarded as one of the world's worst animal plagues. But how did this label become attached to a curable disease that poses little threat to human health? And why, in the epidemic of 2001, did the government's control strategy still rely upon Victorian trade restrictions and mass slaughter?

This groundbreaking and well-researched book shows that, for over a century, FMD has brought fear, tragedy and sorrow- damaging businesses and affecting international relations. Yet these effects were neither inevitable nor caused by FMD itself but were, rather, the product of the legislation used to control it, and in this sense FMD is a 'manufactured' plague rather than a natural one.

A Manufactured Plague turns the spotlight on this process of manufacture, revealing a rich history beset by controversy, in which party politics, class relations, veterinary ambitions, agricultural practices, the priorities of farming and the meat trade, fears for national security and scientific progress all made FMD what it is today.



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