

## **Foot and Mouth Crisis**

The rapid spread of this virulent disease has shocked so many of us in Cumbria. Older residents may recall the 1967 outbreak and understand how devastating it is, but to so many of us who were children or not even born at that time it is hard to appreciate just what this disease is like. We have seen the news footage and read the newspapers, heard the shots and smelled the acrid fumes from the funeral pyres of the affected stock, and wondered how it is that such an outbreak can happen and spread so quickly. Our feelings of outrage at the apparent bungling by the men from the ministry, the seeming lack of communication, and daily changes in advice to both farming and non-farming people, are matched by anger at a government which appeared to be more concerned about planning a General Election than the welfare of a vast number of this country's citizens.

Farmers, and those whose livelihoods are inter-dependent, such as hauliers, markets, and those who cater for tourism, have had a raw deal and not received the levels of support they should be able to expect from their government. The visit of the Prime Minister on the 22nd March was not before time... there is a good case to be made for his presence weeks ago, but that aside it is to be hoped that the dire situation facing Cumbria has at last been brought home to him forcefully and that the help so desperately needed by those affected will be provided.

So far only one case has been confirmed in the village itself, but a study of the map makes for a grim picture if the planned 3km cull of animals at risk is enforced. The 3km radius takes in all Burton, Clawthorpe, Cinderbarrow, Dalton, Borwick, Priest Hutton, Tewitfield and Keer Holme, as well as parts of Hutton Roof, Docker, Capernwray and so on. More than 25 farms seem to be in that area - we can only imagine how devastating the cull will be on both the landscape and the farming families involved, and offer our sympathy and support to those who are having to cope with this dreadful situation.

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