



ThePigSite Latest News *Friday, October 17, 2008*

FMD Legal Case Launched

UK - The British National Farmers' Union-backed legal case brought by 14 farmers claiming damages following last year's foot and mouth disease outbreak in South East England has been formally launched in the High Court.

The claim, which has been brought by 14 livestock farmers whose businesses were affected by the outbreak in Surrey, has been brought against the Institute for Animal Health and Merial Animal Health Limited as operators of the Pirbright facility, and Defra Secretary of State Hilary Benn as licensor and regulator of the facility.

NFU President Peter Kendall said: "Many farming businesses were devastated by the impacts of the outbreak and this claim is about getting redress for those farmers.

"The effects of the outbreak were crippling for livestock farmers – milk had to be poured away, herds that had taken generations to breed had to be slaughtered, high quality livestock couldn't be exported or sold for breeding and instead had to go to slaughter, and animals couldn't be moved to fresh grazing and had to be left where they were. For many farmers, the impacts of the outbreak are still being felt today.

"This was not a case of foot and mouth disease coming in through our borders. The outbreak came from the Pirbright facility. Had there been proper biosecurity and containment measures in place at Pirbright, this outbreak wouldn't have happened. This claim is about holding to account those who were responsible."

The claim has been backed by the NFU and its Legal Assistance Scheme. The solicitors instructed by the claimants are Thring Townsend Lee & Pembertons, one of the NFU's panel firms.

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