

WORLD & NATION



Reuters/CNS

Foot-and-mouth disease has afflicted livestock in the United Kingdom.

Outbreak nixes St. Pat's fests

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) — Catholics along the Louth-Armagh border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland were excused from the obligation to celebrate Sunday Mass March 4 following an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that affects farm animals.

Masses were canceled for that day in 13 parishes at the request of Archbishop Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, after it was confirmed March 1 that foot-and-mouth disease had been detected on a South Armagh farm among sheep illegally imported into Northern Ireland from Britain.

The disease, which rarely infects humans, affects cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and deer. The virus can be carried for miles by the wind, people or cars, and can survive long periods of time on boots and clothing. It may also be spread through contaminated

hay, water and manure.

In Britain and Northern Ireland, about 45,000 animals have been destroyed to stop the disease from spreading.

Ireland has not had an outbreak of the disease since 1941. Emergency measures are in place to prevent its spread. Ireland exports livestock and meat worth 18 billion Irish punts (US\$21 billion) a year.

As a result of the outbreak in Northern Ireland, all major public events in the Republic of Ireland were canceled to reduce the chances of the disease being spread. National parks were closed to hikers, and all fishing and hunting has been banned.

Among the canceled events are St. Patrick's Day parades, which traditionally take place March 17 in every major town and city in the Republic of Ireland. The celebrations mark the feast day of Ireland's patron saint and the country's national holiday.

Women's views mixed on advances in church

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Women in diocesan leadership positions in the United States say their participation in church decision-making is sometimes hindered by sexist attitudes, church structures or the strident voices of women themselves, according to a new survey.

The results were compiled by the Life Cycle Institute of The Catholic University of America in Washington from questionnaires sent to 378 women in 128 dioceses who had been identified by their bishops as diocesan leaders.

The aim of the survey, which was released Feb. 27, was to "examine how women's voices are heard in church decision-making," said Archbishop John G. Vlazny of Portland, Ore., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church, in a letter sent to bishops with the survey results.

Those receiving the questionnaire were asked to identify "the personal characteristics and church structures that help and hinder" the role of women in church decision-making and to describe their own "positive and negative experiences as a woman in diocesan leadership," the archbishop said. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of the 233 women who returned surveys said "diocesan leadership structures do not allow women's voices to be heard," while 30 percent said "diocesan leaders or priests have sexist attitudes or don't understand women."

But more than one-fourth (27 percent) said women's voices are muted when "the woman is overly militant, combative, single-minded or insubordinate."

The Life Cycle Institute's report on the survey results also included selected comments from the respondents, although

none was identified by name or diocese.

"The very fact that a woman must prove her credibility is a hindrance," said one. "But a woman will not be heard if she is defensive, aggressive and refuses to respect the authority and structure of the organization." Asked what helps women's voices to be heard:

- 37 percent said a woman who "has earned trust by loyalty and respectfulness, or by years of service."

- 34 percent cited a woman's competence and "excellent skills, knowledge or credentials."

- 30 percent said it helped when "the bishop and other diocesan leaders are open-minded toward women."

Women are heard, one respondent said, "if they are well-prepared, self-assured, respectful and respectable, have a ... sense of humor, and continue to familiarize themselves with the 'territory.'"

But 87 percent of the women rated as good (63 percent) or excellent (24 percent) the quality of collaboration among clergy, religious and lay people within the diocese. Only 2 percent said it was poor.

"My greatest frustration is the lack of consistency in experiences of collaboration," said one respondent. "Some (but not enough) issues are addressed in a very collaborative manner. Some issues are addressed in an informative manner under the guise of collaboration. Other issues are simply decided and decisions are announced in the form of a memo."

But another said her bishop, "using his leadership, has given an example to priests and pastors that women must be recognized for their contributions."

Forty percent of those responding to the survey were in religious life, 36 percent were married, 17 percent single, 5 percent divorced or separated, and 2 percent widowed.

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Registration deadline is March 27. For more information, or to register, contact Mary Moorhouse at (716) 328-3210 or (800) 388-7177, ext. 225, or e-mail moorhouse@dor.org

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Rarotonga has three schools. Teachers' salaries take up most of the annual budget. One of the schools, built of wood shortly after the end of World War II, is rotting and also contains asbestos. Bishop Stuart O'Connell—shown above with some little friends—says: "Subsidy money could help greatly in this rebuilding project."

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