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EPIZOOTICS, ESPECIALLY of cattle plague, raged through Europe during the eighteenth century with three peaks in incidence. The first occurred from 1711 to 1717, the second from 1745 to 1757, and the third from 1769 to 1786.¹ Their devastating impact on the economy and society can hardly be overrated in the light of estimated mortality rates of between 70 and 90 percent. However, until recently the historiography on veterinary medicine in Germany has concentrated on the development of veterinary services and has been written by practicing veterinarians.² Unlike the diverse and original research on livestock diseases in modern Africa,³ studies on early modern Germany are rare, and hardly any attempt has been made to reveal the effect various diseases have had on the everyday life of rural populations and the enormous challenge epizootics posed to early modern administrations.⁴

This chapter aims to shed new light on some aspects of disease control by focusing on changes and continuities in official legislation in times of cattle plague during the eighteenth century. This disease has become synonymous with rinderpest, but because we do not know exactly what the disease was and retrospective diagnoses are historically suspect, I stick
to the contemporary language that described these epizootics as “horned cattle plague” (Hornvieh-Seuche). The main body of sources is sixty-eight so-called police ordinances (Policeyordnungen) that were published from 1682 to 1798 in the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, then under the Danish crown. Similar ordinances can be found in many other territories of the Holy Roman Empire (in fact, in most parts of Europe), and many historians of veterinary medicine have examined these documents. However, the majority of veterinarians who have analyzed these ordinances have assumed that they reflect reliable facts about actual events. Here, I am arguing for a more careful reading of these sources because these ordinances reveal only government intentions as how to deal with an epidemic at a legislative level. In practice, the reactions of local administrations were shaped by a less rigorous approach to disease control, as Jutta Nowosadtko has recently pointed out.5

Reflecting upon recent research on police ordinances and state-formation processes, which stresses the contested nature of early modern legislation and administration, I will ask how different groups of actors shaped these ordinances in a communicative process. As a short summary of this research, I want to highlight three aspects that are particularly important for my work. First, administrative action was always concerned with local circumstances and the special needs of dominant social groups. Laws and regulations had to be adjusted to meet the demands of everyday life. Regulations may have been formulated as general and universal, but people assumed that these rules would be open to adjustment in special circumstances and individual cases. Hence, law and practice were part of a circular process; this fact is not so much interesting in terms of the difference between legislative claims and actual (non-) compliance as it is in the way in which different social groups negotiated these regulations and for what reasons.6

Second, state formation in the early modern period was not a process of simple, straightforward modernization but rather a continuous one with many ruptures and idiosyncrasies, a process in which authorities and subjects, center and periphery, court and province had to negotiate the extent and limitations of power.7 Power in early modern times was directed at acceptance; and territorial and local authorities, as well as other corporate bodies and certain individuals, collaborated closely. Generally, all parties involved aimed for consensus but did not avoid conflicts when their livelihoods or interests were at stake.6

Finally, early modern political language was a “language of legitimisation”9 that justified its aims according to generally accepted values. In this respect, although negotiation was almost always at play, it rarely happened
between equals, and power was, of course, distributed unevenly. However, individuals were always involved in acts of persuasion when they wanted to exercise political power. According to Michael Braddick, “These acts of persuasion are best observed in micro-historical contexts—the face-to-face situations in which claims to political power are actually asserted and tested. . . . In face-to-face situations the claim to political power is not usually imposed by force, but is negotiated.”

In accordance with these lines of research, early modern society’s reactions to epizootics can provide insights into processes of state formation because epizootics and their containment severely disrupted everyday life. The enforcement of ordinances for the control of animal epidemics, like their predecessors for bubonic plague in humans, involved an interaction between the interests of merchants, artisans, magistrates, rulers, and local authorities. I attempt to show how the early modern state “managed” epidemics by applying legal measures and how various groups and individuals contested them. My focus will be on the rhetoric of the decrees as well as on their content. By looking at general ordinances and other legislation that dealt with specific problems, I explain how animal-disease regulations represented a continuous form of crisis management. Some of the more specific decrees were issued after older and more general ordinances had encountered obstacles either because of opposition from the subjects themselves or because they threatened to undermine a flourishing economy. For these reasons, quite a few ordinances had to be revised as individual epizootics progressed. The evidence suggests that ordinances resulted from two types of situations. First, a decree that covered general aspects of disease control was published once the authorities had discovered an outbreak of cattle plague. Second, once a piece of legislation proved either unworkable in practice or faced considerable opposition, the authorities revised it.

Decrees for cattle-plague control sometimes began with statements about the origin and course of the disease in neighboring countries or parts of the legislators’ territories; their purpose was to prevent the further spread of the disease. To justify strict edicts, authorities would elaborate on their responsibilities for the well-being of their subjects and territory by referring to their “sovereign precaution” (Landes-Väterliche Vorsorge). This terminology can be found in almost every decree and is the most widely used term in the early modern “language of legitimisation.” Most of the more general decrees were very detailed and have paragraphs on various aspects of plague control, such as preventive slaughter, drugs, cleaning and hygienic measures, and methods of diagnosis. I am not going to dwell on
the wide range of measures in detail, but rather concentrate on certain key aspects that were deeply contested, namely, trade regulations, quarantine measures, and the use of animal products.

The Regulation of the Livestock Trade
Since the Middle Ages, the cattle trade between Denmark and the Netherlands had been a major contributor to the economy of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The ox trade accounted for 70 to 80 percent of the yearly revenues at the duchies’ main toll station at Gottorf in Schleswig. In Denmark, farmers raised oxen on pastures for four to five years. During the following winter, these animals were fattened on noble and royal farms. Then, primarily Dutch cattle dealers purchased them and moved them south to the Netherlands, via the duchies. At times, up to fifty thousand head of cattle per year traveled along the so-called oxen routes (Ochsenwege) that ran through the duchies on the central lowlands between the marshes in the west and the hills in the east. This trade peaked in the seventeenth century and gradually decreased at the end of the eighteenth due to the protectionist economic policies of the Dutch and Danish authorities and, more importantly, because serious outbreaks of cattle plague encouraged a stronger reliance on homebred cattle. Economic protectionism was thus linked to measures of disease control and showed that eighteenth-century authorities drew their conclusions from the enormous losses during cattle-plague outbreaks.

Given the importance of the cattle trade, many of the disease-containment regulations specifically concerned trade and markets. The issuing of health certificates for any cattle that moved across the land was probably the most important measure concerning trade in the eighteenth century. This regulation first appeared in the oldest surviving police ordinance that specifically related to the cattle plague. On 1 November 1682, the duke of Schleswig and Holstein, Christian Albrecht, issued an ordinance that was to be the model for every new decree during the eighteenth century. The duke forbade the movement of livestock to pastures and between stables without a health certificate. Another aspect of these regulations was the ban on cattle imports when news of an epidemic in nearby countries reached Schleswig-Holstein, as was the case in the period 1729–31 when the cattle plague hit Poland and the neighboring territories of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg. The ordinances issued between 1729 and 1731 set high penalties for anyone who transgressed a rule and explicitly ordered local authorities to comply rigorously with the legislation. A ban was also introduced restricting the trade in animal products (like meat, skin, and hair),
commodities that could not be imported unless the owners had certificates confirming the animals’ good health while alive. To encourage obedience, the authorities ordered that any cattle that reached the duchies without a health certificate had to be slaughtered and buried immediately, so no profits accrued to the trader. However, although the authorities considered trade restrictions to be efficient methods of disease control, they were aware of the need to keep the economy going and tried to achieve this by guarding and quarantining only infected villages, rather than the whole duchy. The authorities informed ox traders about infected areas and prescribed roads through unaffected places so that cattle movement from Jutland and Denmark would be “safe and without any danger.”

Similar measures were introduced at the start of the most severe outbreak of cattle plague in the eighteenth century, the epidemic of 1745–46. The complete cancellation of cattle markets was the topic of just one of twenty paragraphs of the general ordinance of 5 February 1745. However, the cattle trade was not banned entirely but could continue with all the necessary precautions, such as traders’ having health certificates and avoiding roads that ran through infected places. An ordinance of 19 February 1745 showed that the authorities planned to limit the movement of humans as well as cattle because they assumed that people were also carriers of this dreaded disease. The first paragraph stated that anyone wishing to travel had to have a certificate with details about his or her state of health, stature, age, color (of hair, face, and eyes), facial features, and clothes. Regarding animals, their color and number had to be written on the certificate, and cattle owners and drovers had to confirm by oath that the herd “neither has any signs of the disease, nor was taken from a byre, house or neighborhood, where the epidemic was felt in some way or another” and “he [who trades the animals] himself has not been at a suspicious place.” The government placed much of the onus for enforcing the rules on the toll keepers who were expected to check the certificates and the goods that passed through their gates.

On paper, the punishments for infringements were strict: those who possessed counterfeited certificates were to be prosecuted and sentenced to lifelong hard labor, while public servants who had issued illegal or unsound certificates were fined. The respective severity of the legislation suggests that responsibility lay with the cattle trader rather than with the civic authorities. Additionally, the ordinance of 8 December 1746, which dealt with illicit trade, explicitly harked back to the regulations of the 5 and 19 February ordinances, as well as to that of 11 October 1745. The rhetoric of this ordinance was very vivid and evoked a colorful picture of the smugglers:
“Mischievous and avaricious cattle dealers from Jutland had deliberately and because of cheap prices traded with suspicious livestock and through their greed had propagated the disease in a spiteful manner.”¹⁹ This decree illustrates how the language of these ordinances became more drastic the longer it took the authorities to bring the epizootic under control.

Little changed as the eighteenth century progressed. The cattle plague that had started in February 1745 raged through much of the duchies for at least one year and lingered in some provinces until the spring of 1752—seven years after the first cases. The end of this epizootic was marked by the ordinance of 6 May 1752, which stated that the disease had decreased and the authorities tried to galvanize trade by authorizing a return to normal commerce.²⁰ Nevertheless, in an effort to prevent further introductions of the disease or another flare-up, the authorities still demanded health certificates for the movement of cattle, showing how legislation introduced during an epizootic had legal repercussions that went far beyond the cessation of an outbreak.

Unfortunately, it was only ten years before the authorities had to reintroduce stricter legislation to deal with a further outbreak. On 12 October 1762, all cattle markets were prohibited because cattle plague had appeared in the southern parts of Denmark, bordering the Duchy of Schleswig. This time the epidemic seemed to have raged for a shorter period, and mortality was not as heavy as in the outbreak of 1745–46. Then, an epidemic similar in severity to that of 1745–46 broke out in March 1776 and persisted in the duchies for ten years, peaking in 1779. This time, the authorities issued a twenty-page “General and Constant Ordinance against the Horned Cattle Plague” (Allgemeine und Beständige Anordnung gegen die Hornvieh-Seuche) on 7 March 1776. This decree was similar to laws introduced thirty years earlier. Concerning disease-control measures, there was hardly anything new, but what was striking was the greater amount of detail devoted to the regulations and the greater emphasis on penalties, reflecting a rhetorical desire on the part of the authorities to be more rigorous than ever.²¹ In summary, the length of time it took to eliminate the cattle plague indicated how difficult it was for countries in the early modern period to tackle disease, not least because authorities and affected people alike had to consider economic, social, and political circumstances and sensibilities.

Quarantine

Besides trade regulations, decrees dealing with the segregation of healthy animals outside the villages had the most drastic impact on society and the economy. Quarantine measures can already be found in the 1682 decree.
From 1718 onward, the general ordinances often contained the following types of regulation. First, apparently healthy animals had to be separated from sick bovines and placed in special huts located outside the villages. Next, authorities appointed guards to supervise the cattle; these men were also separated from the village community, living in huts on the grazing lands outside the villages. In addition, if a farm was infected, it was separated from the rest of the community by special quarantine regulations, which mirrored what happened during outbreaks of the bubonic plague. Guards had to watch infected houses and ensure that nobody entered or left the premises. Neighbors were expected to supply food and other provisions, which they deposited at a place some distance from the house. If the disease reached two or three of the bigger farms, the whole village was shut off and had to be guarded by neighboring villagers if their village was not yet infected. Ordinary subjects who were employed as sentinels and guards for infected villages played a major role in disease-containment action. However, their unreliability was apparent almost from the start. To try to keep these subjects loyal, the decree of 1 March 1745, section 2, ordered that sentinels and guards had to swear special oaths to the authorities, stating that they would abide by the rules. Yet, because this decree was widely disregarded, authorities increasingly called upon the militia to enforce the quarantine in the course of the spring and summer of 1745. Later, however, when the plague had still not ceased in October 1745, the government officially disbanded all sentinels and guards.

The quarantining of whole villages from the rest of the country caused serious problems as can be seen in the letters and supplications of farmers from the parish of Tetenbüll in the district of Eiderstedt from 1745 to 1746. These letters provide detailed insight into everyday lives during times of crisis. An example of these tensions is apparent in the petition of a cobbler from Tetenbüll, Dirk Asmus. Asmus's work depended on the use of cattle hides. Complaining of the economic difficulties that arose because he could no longer earn money from trade, he asked for a concession to allow him to send already-manufactured boots and shoes out of the quarantined village. Another major problem was that an infected village was almost under a state of siege, so there were severe food shortages (especially flour). Food was not distributed equally, and many peasants complained that the guards took more than their fair share of provisions, calling them “impertinent eaters and drinkers” because they demanded bacon and meat instead of porridge. Psychological hardship affected members of small religious denominations, such as the Mennonites and Remonstrants, who were unable to attend the usual services at Friedrichstadt about fifteen miles away. In-
stead, they had to take a special oath to enable them to attend the Lutheran church in the village. These are just some of the effects quarantine had on those who had to endure the sequestering of their villages. Similar complaints, as well as petitions demanding changes to the ordinances, reached the authorities from every corner of the duchies, and these increased in number and frequency the longer an epizootic prevailed.

The ordinance of 19 February 1745 is an example of how legal documents can be a good source of information on problems surrounding the implementation of these decrees. Its preamble stated that new developments and reports from the provinces require the extension or restriction and general modification of the general decree of 5 February 1745. The authorities realized that, in practice, many of the laws were unworkable; and for their own credibility, as well as to appease members of the community, they adjusted measures that were impossible to enforce or were abused. This is also clear from the decree of 19 January 1779, which listed a number of exceptions to the complete sequestering of villages. Help from outside was allowed in cases of fire. Priests and doctors could visit a quarantined place when needed in cases of illnesses and deaths, and midwives could attend expectant mothers, all, of course, with the necessary precautions.

The Ban on Skinning

Animal products like milk, skin, hair, horns, and manure played an important part in the rural economy of eighteenth-century Schleswig and Holstein. Oxen were traded mainly for their meat, but the animal products mentioned above also played a vital role in the local economies. In addition, farmers used oxen for drafting, so quarantine measures had an important impact on trade as well as on plowing. Thus, in an economy that was based on the utilization of every part of the animal, the policies of culling not only met with resistance from livestock owners but also caused serious economic problems for the duchies.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the more general decrees forbade the skinning of infected cattle and ordered all carcasses to be buried completely and be covered with lime. However, the authorities often repealed or modified these prohibitions due to the shortage, and thus high costs, of leather and leather goods. This attitude showed how the authorities tried to counterbalance two important issues: plague control and the promotion of economic stability and wealth. These two issues had to be negotiated between different parties time and time again.

In the eighteenth century, because of popular concepts of illness and contagion, dead bovines were also seen as potential carriers of the cattle
plague. So, when the disease broke out in February 1745, the first paragraph of the first ordinance demanded the complete burial of any infected animal’s carcass, four to six feet deep in the ground and covered in unslaked lime as a disinfectant. The authorities also deemed hides to be possible carriers of the disease and introduced a ban on their importation into the Duchy of Holstein on 10 February 1745. Strict adherence to the decrees pushed subjects as well as the authorities to their economic limits, and there was a severe shortage of hides. To try to protect the local economy, the Duchy of Holstein issued a new decree on 6 July 1745, which prohibited the exports of hides and leather from the duchies to ensure that local communities had access to these products.

It was not only hides that became scarce, so too did the fat of animals, used to make tallow for candles. On 14 December 1745, the Danish king issued a special decree for the Duchy of Schleswig on the usage of tallow. Inhabitants were now permitted to take the tallow from dead animals if they did so in remote places and out in the open. This new measure was introduced not only to respond to popular petitions but also to steady prices by putting an end to the speculation in animal products. This measure followed earlier edicts aimed at curbing speculation in foodstuffs, which had led to high prices in the towns. In August 1745, two decrees had forbidden the preemptive buying of large quantities of butter from farmers to sell in small quantities in the cities at inflated prices. In the early modern period, ensuring people had access to affordable food was necessary to uphold public order and forestall revolts that could threaten the stability of the state.

The decree of 27 April 1764 was especially interesting as it provided details about how skinners were to prepare the carcasses. The skin was to be covered with lime or ash and had to dry in the open air away from other animals. Hides could not be sold or moved for a six-week period. The raw tallow had to be melted at the place of removal and prepared before it could be taken home. Further regulations appeared in response to the serious epidemic that broke out in 1776. In a general decree of 7 March 1776, as many as four paragraphs and two supplements were dedicated to regulations about skinning and the use of animal products. These included more details on the procedures for the removal of fat and skins. The skin was to be removed at the burial site and near a watercourse, within twenty-four hours after the animal died. Tails, ears, horns, and hooves had to be buried with the carcass. The removed skins had to be washed and put into limewater for fourteen days until the hair fell off. This hair then had to be buried as well. If the skin could not be processed and tanned immediately,
it had to be put in a remote place for drying. Exportation was allowed only after fourteen days. People dealing with the carcasses were ordered to wear special oilcloths. The whole process was to be watched over by two inspectors; everyone else was restricted: “dispensable people who are only spectators are not admitted.”

Whether these regulations were enforceable in practice, they were nonetheless onerous in terms of time and labor and demonstrated how disease-control measures involved not only restriction on trade and quarantines but had a significant impact on the working lives of rural communities and indeed the territory as a whole. When petitioners asked for the modification of certain decrees, their arguments were mainly economic and fiscal. If the king did not allow certain works to continue, his subjects argued, they would be unable to earn money and therefore incapable of paying their taxes. Not surprisingly, early modern princes often submitted to this line of reasoning.

The Rhetoric and Practice of Livestock Regulations

By evaluating the regulations on cattle epidemics, I have illustrated how an early modern government attempted to control disease through legislation. Different interests on the part of authorities and subjects had to be negotiated and found their expression in either stricter or more detailed ordinances. Hence, animal-disease control in early modern Europe can be understood as a complicated interactive process of continuous crisis management in which legislation was altered in response to the practicalities of enforcing it on the ground. Without oversimplifying, I would argue that, at the beginning of an epidemic, the initial laws prohibited activities that the authorities considered to be possible agents for the spread of the disease. However, in the course of time, once an epidemic had prevailed for several months, these strict measures had to be adapted to accommodate other interests as well. When a serious epizootic continued for several years, as in the case of the 1745–52 outbreak, the authorities eventually surrendered to the fact that efforts to contain the cattle plague had failed, as it had spread throughout the duchies. Again, epizootics happened in a social, economic, and political environment where all parties involved and affected not only had to tackle the immediate impact of the diseases but were eventually forced to contextualize disease within a wider variety of circumstances. Subjects expected authorities to be concerned for their well-being, and administrators sought popular approval whenever possible. The rhetoric of the decree of 20 September 1745 is a perfect example of this: “After the harmful cattle plague had spread in this territory so strongly and this
contagion, alas!, became almost overarching, and therefore the ordered precautions for containment cannot be of any value anymore. We will change proceedings in order to disburden Our beloved and faithful subjects in these calamitous times.  

Forty years later, the official language seems to be very different at first glance. The ordinance of 25 August 1786 that marked the end of the 1776–86 epizootic, suspended earlier prohibitions and stated that “the cattle plague, which broke out years ago in the Duchies, had been checked by the legislative measures.” Nonetheless, in practice, although the disease had disappeared by 1786, the regulations had been difficult to uphold, just as they had been during earlier outbreaks. In 1779, a military cordon between Jutland and the Duchy of Schleswig had been established, guarded by six hundred infantrymen and two hussar squadrons. However, that did not prevent people from breaking through the cordon as can be seen in an ordinance dated 23 February 1779, which allowed sentinels to use force and weapons, albeit with the greatest caution and only in extreme emergency. According to the decree, if anyone was injured or died, it was his or her own fault. Certainly, the language used in the 1770s and 1780s can be considered more drastic and self-confident. The preamble of the very first decree at the onslought of the new outbreak from 7 March 1776 explicitly makes the claim that the regulations were durable, adequate, and “fair to every occurring situation.” Nevertheless, over the next ten years, the Danish king had to issue seven modified decrees, and the exceptions, alterations, and sanctions for individuals and collective bodies altered frequently over the years.

Three different aspects of disease control, trade regulations, quarantine, and the restrictions on skinning provide important examples of the interrelationship between law and practice in eighteenth-century Schleswig-Holstein. Each of these issues sheds a different light on the problems surrounding epizootic containment. Since the authorities conceptualized the disease as contagious (even though the nature of the somewhat mysterious contagion remained unnoticed), all contact between healthy and sick animals had to be prevented, and trade was often banned completely at the first sign of disease in the duchies or in neighboring territories. However, as the epidemic continued unabated, these measures were relaxed to keep the economy working. One measure that facilitated trade, while trying to prevent the spread of disease, was the introduction of health certificates. The same applied to the regulations concerning animal hides and products. Instead of an outright ban on the trade in hides and tallow, eighteenth-century decrees tried to make the skinning process safer by introducing measures intended to eliminate a source of contagion.
It is tempting to see these developments as a kind of conscious learning process on the governments’ part, as they responded to economic and social realities. But the quarantine regulations attracted considerable resistance from subjects who petitioned the authorities to moderate the rules. Popular complaints exemplified a variety of problems, like shortages of food and animal products. Although the authorities considered a complete quarantine of farms and villages to be the most effective means of containing disease, they were unable to shut off whole villages for a long time. In addition, many of the regulations were subject to infringement and abuse. The repetition and extension of certain laws were evidence of this. At the same time, these extensions can also be understood as the authorities’ attempt to prove that they had the capacity to act and control the disease and can be regarded as indicative of the evolution of state building in early modern Europe. Regulations for epizootics clearly show that this process was a complicated combination of bottom-up and top-down developments. The evidence further illustrates that a dreadful crisis like an outbreak of cattle plague shook the foundations of eighteenth-century society and that governments addressed this by mobilizing economic as well as social, cultural, and legal resources. Only by looking at all four aspects is one able to understand the impact of epizootics on agrarian societies.

Notes

This chapter presents the first results of a PhD project on the history of everyday life and governmental action during times of cattle plague in eighteenth-century Schleswig and Holstein. The dissertation was submitted in October 2008 and defended in March 2009 at the University of Göttingen. To date, there has been no study with a similar focus. The veterinary dissertation by Almuth Wagner, “Die Entwicklung des Veterinärwesens im Gebiet des heutigen Schleswig-Holsteins im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tierseuchen” (VMD diss. Freie Universität Berlin, 1992), is mainly concerned with the development of veterinary services and the profession. I would like to thank Karen Brown for her invaluable help in improving and clarifying this paper. All remaining shortcomings are, of course, my own.

1. For a detailed, but at times rather ahistorical, overview on the history of cattle plague in early modern Europe, see Wilhelm Dieckerhoff, Geschichte der Rinderpest und ihrer Literatur: Beitrag zur Geschichte der vergleichenden Pathologie (Berlin: Enslin, 1890); and C. A. Spinage, Cattle Plague: A History (New York: Kluwer, 2003). Years of outbreaks in the different territories of Europe varied, of course.

2. See the most recent German textbook on the history of veterinary medicine: Angela von den Driesch and Joris Peters, Geschichte der Tiermedizin:


and Freist, Staatsbildung als kultureller Prozess, 69–90. Although Braddick analyzes the role of local magistrates in the state-formation process, his remarks about early modern political “language as legitimisation” (69) are very useful in the context of this paper as well.

10. Ibid., 70.

11. Nowosadtko, “Die policierte Fauna,” 317. Jutta Nowosadtko argues that police ordinances against epizootics, well into the eighteenth century, combined a whole range of measures because of uncertainties about the nature and cause of epidemics—similar to their model: ordinances against bubonic plague (322). Although I agree with many aspects of Nowosadtko’s research, my focus is different insofar as I concentrate on the impact of epidemics on the management of everyday life and Nowosadtko elaborates on questions about animal husbandry and the human-animal relationship in general.


13. Cf. the decrees of 21 December 1729, 11 December 1730, and 3 April 1731. All ordinances quoted here are held in the manuscript collection of Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek in Kiel. All translations from the German originals are my own.


15. The extension of 19 February 1745, also forbade horse and small-animal markets.

16. Additionally, this decree prescribed the eviction of beggars and the foreign poor. I just want to note here that on 20 March 1745, the general ordinance on begging of 7 September 1732 was renewed and that the time of its renewal had not been chosen by chance but had been certainly influenced by the raging cattle plague.

17. Decree of 27 February 1745, §1.

19. Ordinance of 8 December 1746.

20. Ordinance of 6 May 1752. Another decree of 17 March 1779 makes this even more explicit. It refers to the importance of cattle trade for the marsh districts especially and the interest of the authorities in balancing plague control and economic development. The decree then prescribed health certificates and close surveillance by officials.

21. Notably novel was the stipulation forbidding the export of livestock that had survived the last epidemic. This must mean that the authorities believed these animals had acquired some immunity to the disease and that they were thus very valuable for the economy and breeding purposes. This decree even encouraged livestock owners to take their immune cattle to provinces where the epizootic prevailed. The measure can be seen as a precursor to official efforts in the nineteenth century to encourage the breeding of fitter and more productive livestock. In a commentary on the ordinance of 3 January 1763, Eduard Ambrosius, the editor of a collection of Schleswig-Holstein ordinances from 1579 to around 1800, considered the culling of animals unnecessary and even counterproductive because it inhibited infection. Eduard Ambrosius, *Chronologisches Verzeichniß über verschiedene Königliche und Fürstliche Verordnungen und Verfügungen für die Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein von 1579 an bis 1792: Mit einem kurzen Inhalt derselben, einigen Anmerkungen und einem Sach-Register, Teil 5: Von 1760 bis 1770* (Schleswig: Serringhausen, 1801).

22. The decree of 21 March 1718 banned farmers from moving their cattle to communal grazing ground and from taking them to infected villages and stalls. This decree also included two interesting paragraphs concerning the assessment of an animal's or village's state of health. In order to find out whether farms were infected, susceptible cattle from disease-free places were brought to these properties to see if “something contagious will show itself.” However, the authorities omitted this “experiment” from later decrees, presumably because it was too risky, potentially causing the unnecessary loss of valuable livestock.

23. Ordinance of 11 October 1745.

24. These letters are held in the Kreisarchiv für den Kreis Nordfriesland in Husum, KANF A 2 Ksp. Tetenbüll 95, and a selection has been published by Johan Redlef Volquardsen, “Die Viehseuche in Eiderstedt, besonders im Kirchspiel Tetenbüll im 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Nordfriesisches Jahrbuch* 2 (1966): 101–09. For a Danish peasant’s perspective on the cattle plague, see Karl Peder Pedersen, “Cattle Plague and Rural Economy in 18th Century Funen: The Notebook of the Funen Tenant Peder Madsen at Munkgaarde: Applications and

25. KANF A 2 Ksp. Tetenbüell 95.
26. A similar decree for the Duchy of Holstein was published on 20 January 1746.
27. Decree of 7 March 1776, supplement C.
29. Ordinance of 25 August 1786.
31. Decree of 23 February 1779.