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"The 'Normative Forces' of Difference: Ecology, Economy and Society during Cattle Plagues in the Eighteenth Century"

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One of the recurring themes in the public perception of containment policies during the current COVID-19 pandemic are the supposedly uneven and everchanging measures taken up by international, national and local authorities. This is especially the case in countries with a federal structure, like Germany. Not surprisingly, historical containment policies and strategies of coping with epidemics have been varied too and were also discussed intensely. This short essay will analyse the communication between farmers, artisans, merchants, physicians and local as well as higher level administration during outbreaks of cattle plague in eighteenth century Northern Germany / Denmark. The duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, geographically located between the Baltic and the North Sea, are especially well suited for such a study because of their characteristically distinct regional differences in geomorphology and the varied economic practices, property rights and political organisation which directly or indirectly resulted from one another. Environmental factors clearly influenced administrative measures as well as public responses or demands regarding these policies. (Abstract)

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