



Release: Enjoy your holiday.....just don't bring it home.

Is our state FMD ready? 6 July 2022

Enjoy your holiday.....just don't bring it home.

As school holidays start across Australia, many happy travellers are jumping on one of the dozens of direct flights between Australia and Bali, where the local government has recently confirmed 63 cases of foot and mouth disease (FMD). While holiday makers soak up the Balinese sun, the TFGA is focussed on border biosecurity – much like our honey and pollination industries in light of the recent varroa mite incursion in NSW.

The TFGA is calling for the Tasmanian Government to ramp up the state's biosecurity response in readiness for FMD.

“We have members asking right now for Tasmania-specific information regarding an FMD outbreak,” said Marcus McShane TFGA Acting CEO.

The Tasmanian Government put together an industry taskforce for FMD and lumpy skin disease; its last meeting was on the 14th of June 2022, with six TFGA representatives in attendance - three staff members and three industry representatives.

“The next meeting isn't scheduled till August and more work needs to be done to make sure Tasmania is fully prepared if FMD hits the mainland and Tasmania itself,” said Marcus.

“Ideally we are calling for the state to conduct a crisis 'dry run' involving key industry stakeholders, so we all know who needs to do what and when. We need increase tracking at our airports especially over the school holiday period.

“We want to iron out any communication missteps and ambiguity, so we can minimise the loss and devastation an FMD outbreak would cause our state.”

The TFGA has launched today an awareness campaign to alert the holidaying public of the risk of FMD to Tasmanian agriculture. It outlines the importance of disinfecting footwear and properly declaring items on re-entry to Australia. The TFGA website has a dedicated page to FMD preparedness and will be mailing out farm signage, farm biosecurity templates and contact information for its members.

What is FMD?

“Foot and mouth disease is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals including buffalo, pigs, cattle, sheep, deer, camelids and goats. It is capable of extremely rapid spread – often, entire herds can be infected within 48 hours. Cattle are most susceptible, though pigs spread the disease fastest. An incursion of this disease into Australia would lead to a loss in production of meat and milk, cessation of trade and the slaughter of many animals.” www.agriculture.gov.au

We ask Tasmanian farmers to be ready and vigilant for FMD.

- Know what signs to look out for – please see www.TFGA.com.au for a fact sheet if unsure
- Ensure your farm biosecurity plan is up to date and equipped for an outbreak
- Adhere to all livestock traceability requirements
- Monitor who is coming onto your farm – ensure any visitors who have recently travelled overseas take the appropriate steps to minimise the risk of transmission through contaminated clothing and shoes.
- If livestock exhibit any usual signs, call your local vet or Australia's Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888

Image: Membership Officer Kellie Morris gets a warm welcome as she delivers another farm biosecurity sign



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