



Photo: FAO-EUFMD

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS AND SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERS ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) AND PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

AUSTRALIA IS FMD FREE – PLEASE HELP US KEEP IT THAT WAY!

What is FMD?

Foot-and-Mouth disease is a notifiable viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals, including cows, sheep, pigs, goats, and deer. It is highly contagious, easily transmitted between animals, and can be carried and spread by contaminated equipment or clothing (including footwear).

FMD is a serious animal disease that causes blisters and lesions in the mouths, feet, udders and teats of infected animals. This can lead to difficulty eating and walking, resulting in loss of body condition or long-term loss of milk production. Although not usually fatal for healthy adult animals, FMD can cause deaths for new-born animals by damaging juvenile tissues.

FMD is widespread globally, with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) currently listing only 66 countries as being completely free of the virus. Several other countries have infected areas, usually managed via designated control zones and vaccination programs.

FMD was reported and confirmed to be present in Indonesia in May 2022, and has since been detected in Bali as well. As a result, Australia and Tasmania has increased awareness actions and surveillance at entry points to further prevent the introduction of FMD to Australia.

If returning from an FMD infected country – avoid contact with livestock or farms for seven days.

The impacts of FMD

Managing an outbreak of FMD in Australia would likely result in the slaughter of millions of livestock, the loss of thousands of jobs, the closure of many businesses and serious long-term damage to our rural communities.

If an FMD outbreak was to occur, our major export markets for meat, dairy products and possibly even wool would be closed immediately.

It is estimated that a large multi-state outbreak of FMD could cost the Australian economy \$80 billion in lost revenue over 10 years and take up to 10 years for rural communities to recover from the effects of an FMD outbreak.

Some effects of an FMD outbreak in Australia could include:

- The immediate loss of export markets, especially to overseas countries
- Rapid spread of the viral disease if strong farm biosecurity practices are not followed
- Slaughter of animals in attempts to limit the spread of FMD.

FMD can infect an entire herd within 48 hours. It is crucial for farms to adopt and adhere to **strong farm biosecurity practices** to prevent infection.



Photo: Mark Stevenson

What can you do?

Some simple steps you can take immediately to help protect our Tasmanian agricultural industries and your properties include:

- Inspecting your livestock regularly and investigate any unusual signs of disease. Ensure you are using appropriate PPE where necessary.
- Implement strong biosecurity hygiene and cleaning processes on your property.
- Quarantine newly purchased livestock.
- Report suspected disease to your veterinarian or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline (1800 675 888).
- Maintain and uphold livestock traceability requirements such as the NLIS.
- Wash hands and wear clean shoes & clothing before and after handling livestock.

If you do not already have a farm biosecurity plan for your property, start one now. There are many resources available online which will assist including the websites of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) – as well as the Farm Biosecurity website.

It is essential early signs of FMD are not missed. If you have any concerns immediately contact your veterinarian or call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline.

A very important part of farm biosecurity is having suitable wash down and cleaning facilities for gear and equipment, clothing and footwear, and vehicles or other agricultural equipment.

Cleaning and disinfection of clothing and equipment remains one of the strongest protections against the spread of FMD.

When moving between properties you should always ensure that any clothing or footwear has been cleaned with detergent and hot water to remove bulk contamination (above 75°C where possible), and then disinfected with an appropriate solution such as sodium hypochlorite or citric acid. Further information on suitable disinfectants can be found on the NRE Tas website.

Swill feeding is a major contributor to the spread of FMD. The 2001 FMD outbreak in the UK started through the feeding of swill to pigs.

'Swill feeding' is the act of feeding of food scraps to pigs. Prohibited pig feed ('swill') includes meat (raw or cooked), bone, blood, offal or hide derived from a mammal and any thing that has come into contact with these materials.

If you suspect that someone is feeding swill to their pigs or if you know of someone attempting to sell swill to pig owners, it is important that such activities are reported to Biosecurity Tasmania.

Contacts and Resources

Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline:

1800 675 888

Biosecurity Tasmania
(03) 6165 3777



Farm Biosecurity
Website

Commonwealth
Department of
Agriculture, Fisheries
and Forestry

