

KEY RESOURCES FOR FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE



20 July 2022

Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly contagious animal viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. It has significant animal health and welfare implications and much of Australia's market access relies on maintaining our FMD-free status.

See a list of FMD information and other biosecurity resources below.

Quick facts about FMD

[What is FMD](#)

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious virus disease of animals. It is one of the most serious livestock diseases. It affects cloven-hoofed animals (those with divided hoofs), including cattle, buffalo, camels, sheep, goats, deer and pigs. It is found in many parts of the world, and has been reported in countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and South America. While it can cause serious production losses the most significant impact of the disease occurs because of its effect on trade in livestock and livestock products. Countries without the disease, which include many of Australia's major trading partners do not import from, or severely restrict imports from FMD-infected countries.

There are seven serotypes of the virus: A, O, C, SAT1, SAT2, SAT3 and Asia1. These are further subdivided into more than 60 strains. The importance of these serotypes is that protection against one serotype (e.g. through vaccination) will not protect against infection with another serotype. Different serotypes dominate in different parts of the world.

[How is it transmitted?](#)

FMD is a viral disease that spreads rapidly between animals. Virus is excreted in breath, saliva, mucus, milk and faeces. The virus can be excreted by animals for up to four days before clinical signs appear. Animals can become infected through inhalation, ingestion and direct contact. The disease spreads most commonly through the movement of infected animals. In sheep the symptoms

can be absent or very mild, and undetected infected sheep can be an important source of infection. FMD virus can also be spread on wool, hair, grass or straw; by the wind; or by mud or manure sticking to footwear, clothing, livestock equipment or vehicle tyres.

Pigs are regarded as 'amplifying hosts' because they can excrete very large quantities of the virus in their exhaled breath. Cattle are very susceptible to, and able to be infected by breathing in small quantities of the virus. In some animals ('carriers'), the virus can continue to be carried for long periods (months or years) after apparent recovery.

[What plans are in place?](#)

There is a comprehensive range of plans in place to deal with an emergency disease outbreak. These plans are revised and updated on a regular basis as part of continuous improvement processes. The Australian Veterinary Plan or [AUSVETPLAN](#) is the central plan for controlling and eradicating an outbreak.

There is also a national relief and recovery coordination framework. This framework sets out roles and responsibilities in dealing with the economic and social impact of a disease outbreak and returning communities to normal after an outbreak.

Individual agencies also have emergency management response plans. For example, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has the Critical Incident Response Plan (CIRP) which details the role of the department in an emergency and the conduct of its response operations.

[Does FMD affect humans?](#)

Human infections have been reported but they are very rare and do not result in serious disease. Humans can carry the virus in their nose for up to 24 hours and can be a source of infection for animals.

[How could the FMD virus enter Australia?](#)

Australia doesn't allow imports of any susceptible live animals, semen or uncooked meat or unprocessed dairy products from FMD-affected countries or zones. FMD virus is most likely to be introduced in contaminated, illegally imported animal products.

*This information has been provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Factsheets

[FMD Factsheet for Travellers](#)

[National Livestock Standstill Factsheet](#)

Key resources

[Animal Health Australia](#)

[Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – FMD information page](#)

[Travelling to Australia? Guidelines on bringing or mailing goods to Australia](#)

[Farm Biosecurity Action Planner](#)

Industry Webinar

On Wednesday 20 July, the NFF hosted an industry webinar to discuss Australia's FMD response so far, firsthand insight into what is happening in Indonesia, Australia's preparedness efforts and response plan in the event of an incursion.

<https://nff.org.au/key-issue/key-resources-for-foot-mouth-disease/>