

Foot and Mouth Disease

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What is foot and mouth disease (FMD)?

FMD is a severe, highly infectious, viral disease of cloven-hoofed animals. Although usually not fatal, diseased nursing animals may die, growing animals have lower weight gains, and adult animals gain less weight and produce less milk.

Is the disease a foreign or emerging/endemic disease?

FMD is a foreign animal disease.

What animals are affected?

Cloven-hoofed livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, swine and deer are highly susceptible to the virus.

How is it transmitted?

The FMD virus is transmitted by direct and indirect routes. The virus is shed from infected animals in blister fluid, milk and semen and can then be transmitted to susceptible animals. It can also be transmitted by aerosol droplets, clothing, shoes and vehicle tires.

What is the incubation period of the disease?

Animals show symptoms after an incubation period of 1 to 8 days.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are similar to other diseases such as vesicular stomatitis, bluetongue, bovine viral diarrhea and swine vesicular disease. Veterinarians must test to differentiate between these diseases. The most noticeable symptom is blisters or erosions on the tongue and lips, in the mouth, on the teats, and between hooves.

Can people be infected?

No.

Is there a vaccine?

Yes. In the event of an FMD outbreak, there is a vaccine that will help control the spread of the disease. There are several different types and subtypes of FMD virus and the vaccine has to match both to be effective.

Is this disease preventable?

Yes. Livestock producers should follow a standard biosecurity management plan. Many preventive measures are in place to help protect the U.S. from an outbreak of FMD, and in fact, the U.S. has been FMD-free since 1929. To help maintain that status, any unusual animal health symptoms should be reported promptly to a veterinarian or to the state or federal animal regulatory agency. A prompt diagnosis is necessary to eradicate the disease. The USDA prohibits the entry of live animals and animal products from areas known to be infected with FMD.

Is this a reportable disease?

Yes. If confirmed, USDA-APHIS would move quickly to trace the origins of infected or exposed animals, establish and maintain FMD quarantines, and destroy infected and exposed animals.

Who should be contacted if FMD is suspected?

Immediately contact a private veterinarian or the state or federal animal health regulatory agency.

For more information:

Texas AgriLife Extension Service—Veterinary Medicine:

<http://aevm.tamu.edu>

The Center for Food Safety and Public Security:

<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/default.htm>

USDA-APHIS:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health

Texas Animal Health Commission:

http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/brochures/FMD_Travel.pdf

National Pork Board:

<http://www.pork.org/producers/security%20Biosecurity/biosecurity%20book.pdf>