

DPI Primefact

Foot-and-mouth disease – National Livestock Standstill

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Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI

What is foot-and-mouth disease?

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a serious and highly contagious disease that affects all cloven-hoofed animals including alpacas, bison, buffalo, camels, cattle, deer, goats, llama, pigs and sheep. FMD does not affect horses or donkeys, or companion animals such as dogs and cats.

The signs of FMD include blisters or erosions in and around the mouth, snout, tongue, and lips, on teats or between and above the hooves or feet, drooling, fever, limping and lameness, or reluctance to move.

Australia is free from FMD. In Australia, FMD is classified as an Emergency Animal Disease.

If you suspect any signs of FMD it must be reported immediately to the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888**.

What is a National Livestock Standstill?

A National Livestock Standstill is a total halt on the movement of FMD susceptible livestock that would occur if a FMD outbreak was to occur in Australia.

A National Livestock Standstill will restrict the spread of the disease and allow authorities time to conduct surveillance activities and trace the movement of affected livestock to understand the extent of the outbreak and determine the necessary response actions.

When a National Livestock Standstill is declared, no new movements of FMD susceptible animals will be allowed unless a permit has been issued by NSW DPI. FMD susceptible animals already in transit at the time a livestock standstill is declared must finish their journey within four hours of the declaration. This may be achieved by returning to their origin, proceeding to the planned destination or to another holding site as directed by an Authorised Officer.

A National Livestock Standstill is a key component of the FMD Response Strategy that forms part of the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) for emergency animal disease responses.

Government and industry need the support of everyone for a National Livestock Standstill to be effective. Everyone in the livestock supply chain needs to understand how a livestock standstill works and be able to implement it efficiently to assist with prompt disease control and eradication. This includes all owners of FMD susceptible species, transporters, livestock agents, and those who work in supporting businesses such as abattoirs, saleyards and feedlots.

Which species are affected by a National Livestock Standstill?

The National Livestock Standstill will apply to all FMD susceptible animals. That is all cloven-hooved animals such as pigs, cattle, sheep, goats, deer, camelids (alpaca, llama, camels), bison and buffalo.

It also includes any other susceptible wild and zoo animals found in NSW including giraffe, Asian elephants, Himalayan tahr, Barbary sheep, antelopes and banteng.

Horses, donkeys and zebras are not cloven-hooved and do not become infected with FMD. They may however carry FMD contaminated material such as dirt and may need to be cleaned prior to transport in the event of a National Livestock Standstill. The specific details will be provided in any Emergency Order issued at the time.

Who calls the National Livestock Standstill?

Australia will implement a National Livestock Standstill from the time of diagnosis of FMD or on strong suspicion of the disease. The standstill will be triggered by the National Management Group (NMG) acting on the advice of the Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (CCEAD).

These groups are the national government-industry committees which are convened during emergency animal disease outbreaks to ensure rapid decisions are made for effective responses.

Following the decision by the NMG, the New South Wales government would then declare a livestock standstill via a biosecurity emergency order under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

How long will the livestock standstill last?

The standstill will initially be implemented for 72 hours; this allows time for the movements of potentially infected animals to be traced.

The standstill may be extended if necessary, depending on a risk assessment using the information available at the time.

Once the standstill emergency order is revoked, other emergency zone orders will be declared to manage the ongoing risk of FMD spread until the outbreak is under control.

Can livestock be transported during a standstill?

During the standstill you must not move any animals that are susceptible to FMD (listed above) off a property, or deliver any of these animals onto a property, unless:

- the animals were already on the road when the standstill was called, or
 - a movement permit has been issued by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.
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If a livestock standstill is enforced whilst you are in the process of transporting livestock, there is a four-hour travel limit after the order has been announced for you to:

- have completed your journey which can be from farm to farm or to a feedlot or abattoir, or
- return to where you loaded the livestock.

How will a livestock standstill impact livestock in saleyards?

Saleyard management will implement their livestock standstill action plan.

- Sales in progress will be stopped and attendees will be advised of their obligations
- No livestock will be allowed on or off the saleyard (livestock will be fed and watered on site until the standstill is over)

All trucks must be emptied and appropriately washed down.

How will a livestock standstill impact animals on a travelling stock route?

FMD susceptible animals that are on a travelling stock reserve when the livestock standstill is called must be moved directly to the closest available water source on the travelling stock reserve and held in the immediate vicinity of that water source until further directions are provided.

Are there penalties for not complying with a livestock standstill?

People who do not comply with the standstill may contribute to the disease spreading, increasing the time and cost required to contain and eradicate it. Delays in eradication of this disease would not only affect agriculture industries, but as seen in the United Kingdom's FMD outbreak in 2001, would extend well beyond the farm gate with significant economic and environmental repercussions, including delays to the reopening of Australia's livestock export markets.

Beginning new journeys or moving at-risk animals during a livestock standstill without approval is a breach of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and is illegal.

Penalties for breaching movement restrictions prescribed in a biosecurity emergency order can include fines and imprisonment.

Authorised staff of the Department of Primary Industries, Local Lands Services, Transport for NSW, and NSW Police all have powers to give directions that must be followed during a livestock standstill. You must comply with all regulations, orders and instructions issued as part of a livestock standstill.

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