

# Foot and Mouth Disease fact sheet

## About Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly contagious animal disease that affects all cloven-hoofed animals (those with a split toe). These include cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, deer and camelids (alpacas, llamas and camels). It does not affect horses or donkeys.

The FMD virus is carried by live animals and in contaminated meat and dairy products, bones and untreated hides. The virus can be present and transmitted through animal waste (urine and faeces), soil, vehicles and equipment used with infected animals and carried on people's clothing and footwear. The virus can also be carried by the wind.

Pigs can become infected with the FMD virus from eating contaminated meat, meat products or imported dairy goods. Other species are most commonly infected by inhaling (breathing in) the virus.

FMD can spread rapidly through close contact with an infected animal as the virus is excreted in the breath, saliva, mucous, milk, blood and faeces.

FMD is not of concern for human health or food safety. Commercially produced meat, meat products, milk and dairy products are safe to eat. FMD is not the same as hand-foot-and-mouth disease which is a common disease in young children.

## Clinical signs

Cattle, pigs, sheep, buffalo, deer, camelids and goats may show fever, drooling and reluctance to move.

These animals can suffer from blisters on the mouth, snout, tongue, lips, teats or between and above the hooves on the feet.

Blisters may be intact or ruptured, exposing raw tissue which is very painful.

The free [Emergency Animal Diseases Field Guide for Veterinarians](#) has more specific information about FMD

It is critical that all livestock owners in Australia know what FMD looks like, and that they check their animals regularly.

If you suspect any signs of FMD it must be immediately reported to the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888**, or a Local Land Services District Veterinarian on 1300 795 299.



Goat with blister in mouth. Image: FAO-EUFMD



Cow with blisters on hoof. Image: Mark Stevenson



Pig with blisters on snout. Image: FAO-EUFMD

## Prevention efforts

Australia has detailed, well-rehearsed FMD response plans and arrangements in place. Governments and industry's preparedness is continuously reviewed.

Australia has strict biosecurity protocols in place to prevent high risk materials, such as contaminated equipment or clothing, animals and animal products, being brought in by travellers who may have been exposed to diseased animals.

The AUSVETPLAN response strategy for FMD is part of our national response arrangements. The plan sets out the nationally agreed approach that would be taken to respond to FMD if it occurred in Australia. The plan includes an assessment of the role of vaccination in responding to an incursion.

## Biosecurity and reporting

### Goods and people coming into Australia

Everyone has a role in preventing harmful pests and diseases from entering Australia.

It is illegal to bring frozen, chilled and freeze-dried foods, including meat and dairy products, into Australia without an import permit.

If you're travelling to Australia, importing goods or ordering goods through the mail, be aware of what is permitted entry to Australia. You can do this by checking the website at [www.awe.gov.au/travelling/bringing-mailing-goods](http://www.awe.gov.au/travelling/bringing-mailing-goods). Some foods, animal and plant products can carry pests or diseases that you won't know are there.

Ensure all footwear, clothing and equipment is free of mud, animal manure and mucus.

It is recommended that people who have been in contact with FMD-infected animals or infected areas DO NOT visit Australian farms or handle livestock for at least 7 days after returning to Australia.

### Livestock owners

It is critical that all livestock owners know the signs of foot-and-mouth disease, and they check their animals regularly. If you suspect any signs of FMD it must be reported immediately to the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888**, or a Local Land Services District Veterinarian on 1300 795 299.

Feeding meat, animal products and imported dairy goods to pigs could cause an outbreak of FMD in Australia. This practice, of feeding prohibited pig feed (swill) is a high-risk pathway for introduction of FMD and other animal diseases into Australia.

All livestock owners should have stringent biosecurity measures in place on their property as part of their farm biosecurity management plan, including accurate records of livestock movement. To access free farm biosecurity advice and resources visit [farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://farmbiosecurity.com.au).