

FMD summary of take home information

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) remains one of the largest biosecurity risks to Australia, threatening to decimate our agricultural sector, regional businesses and the national economy at a predicted loss of \$80 billion over 10 years (ABARES report). This disease affects all cloven hooved animals (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, deer, alpacas etc.), is transmitted in animal products (meat, milk, untreated hides, bones) and on the clothing of people, vehicles, and aerosol transmission (air particles in the wind). The virus can remain dormant, living in soil over the cooler months and result in clinical disease up to 6 months after being introduced to a property. It is essential that livestock producers are familiar with the signs of FMD (blisters around feet or snout, lameness, drooling, abortion/sudden death in neonates, depression, fever, reduced milk yield).

The imminent risk posed by the current outbreak in Indonesia has prompted the strongest biosecurity response in our nation's history. We now have biosecurity officers with increased powers, detector dogs, sanitisation mats at airports, biosecurity response zones, 100% screening of mail from Indonesia and China and 100% risk profiling of returning passengers from Indonesia. Additionally, Australia has provided expert veterinary assistance, soon by 1 million vaccines for FMD.

Currently, the **most likely entry point for FMD to Australia** is the illegal importation of milk or meat products which is subsequently, illegally fed to pigs. This practice is called swill feeding. Pigs shed up to 3000 times more virus than cattle and remain a major problem during an outbreak. In Australia we also have the added stressor of a large feral pig population. Producers are encouraged to report and feral pig sightings to their local LLS office and implement an appropriate control strategy.

In the event of an outbreak, along with an immediate national standstill, the goal would be to eradicate the disease and resume our export trade as soon as possible. We currently have response strategy & a national vaccination bank for FMD, held overseas. Many factors would influence whether & how a vaccination program would be implemented. Refer to the AUSVETPLAN for further information.

At a local level, we strongly urge livestock producers to implement basic biosecurity measures:

- Inspect all incoming stock, quarantine & maintain records of all movements
- Always request certification and records for traceability (commodity vender declaration) for farm inputs such as fertilizer
- Maintain 1-2 entry points on farm with a designated parking space. Where practical, use your own vehicle to move visitors through paddocks.
- Boundary and internal fence maintenance, as well as biosecurity signs with a contact number are very important
- At the very least, remove all organic matter (dirt & mud) from boots & vehicle before leaving your own property, or visiting another. (We suggest you hold your visitors including vets, stock agents, agronomists etc. to the same standard)

Our message remains to be alert, not alarmed and report and potential signs of disease to our practice 6236 8222, or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline: 1800 675 888