

Foot and Mouth Disease

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious and sometimes fatal viral disease of cloven-hoofed animals, including domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, as well as antelope, bison, elk, and deer. The llama and alpaca may develop mild symptoms, but are resistant to the disease and will not pass it on to others of the same species.

Incubation

The incubation period for the FMD virus in susceptible animals can range from two to eight days, but can be up to twenty-one days post infection with the virus. Infected animals can spread the virus one to two days prior to the onset of clinical signs and for seven to ten days after the presentation of clinical signs.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms will differ slightly per species. Some of the symptoms noted can easily be mistaken for other diseases in a species, so it is important to contact your veterinarian immediately.

Signs of Foot and Mouth in Cattle

- Sores, ulcers and blisters on feet, nose, lips and in the mouth
- Excessive salivation with drooling of saliva from the mouth and smacking of lips
- Shivering
- Tender and sore feet with vesicles and ulcers on the coronary band
- Reduced milk yield
- Fever and off feed
- Cows can develop vesicles or lesions on their teats
- Bulls can develop vesicles and blisters on scrotum

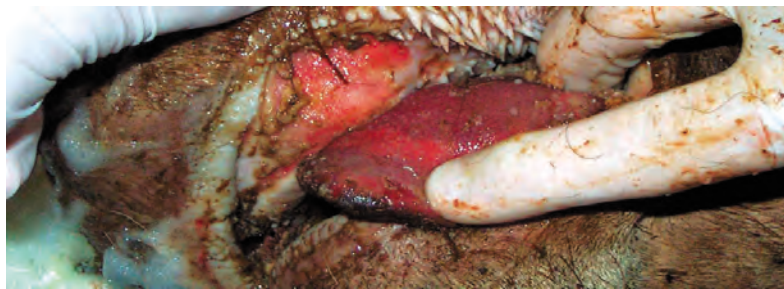
Signs of Foot and Mouth in Pigs

- Blisters may develop on the snout or on the tongue
- Blisters form on the upper edge of the hoof, where the skin and horn meet, and on the heels and in the cleft
- Sudden lameness
- Prefers to lie down
- The pig is reluctant to move and squeals in pain and hobbles around
- Decreased feed consumption

It is important to remember that other swine diseases have lesions identical to foot and mouth disease and therefore anyone who sees blisters in pigs must report the sighting to their veterinarian to pursue further testing for suspected foot and mouth disease.

Signs of Foot and Mouth in Sheep

- Sores and blisters on feet, nose, lips and in the mouth around the dental pad and on the tongue
- Sudden onset of lameness in multiple animals with varying degree of severity of lameness
- Blisters will be found on the foot where the hoof joins the skin which may extend all round the coronet and in the cleft of the foot. When these blisters burst, extensive ulcers may result and may lead to separation of horn from the tissues underneath. Hair round the hoof may appear damp.



Detecting the disease in sheep

The disease can be difficult to recognize in sheep as sometimes as little as five percent of animals in infected flocks show any signs. Look for the following signs:

- Sudden death in lambs. In several recent confirmed outbreaks, the most obvious sign was apparently healthy lambs dropping dead
- Abortions
- Lameness (this may only last for a short time)
- Listless and off their food

Biosecurity Measures

Normal production practices should always include basic biosecurity measures geared to minimize the introduction and spread of all infectious animal diseases, including:

- restrict visitor access to animals, especially visitors from overseas.
- where possible, limit contact between domestic and wild animals
- routinely clean and disinfect footwear, clothing and equipment
- record movement of people, animals and equipment on and off farms and ranches
- purchase animal replacements, feed and supplies from reputable suppliers



- isolate new animals and replacements for at least 14 days before introducing them into the herd
- anyone leaving a farm to attend another farm or an event where livestock are present should ensure their footwear and clothing has been properly cleaned and disinfected prior to departure and prior to returning home
- ensure all staff are familiar with principles of biosecurity and protocols in place

Why is biosecurity important?

The appearance of FMD on Canadian soil would immediately shut down entire segments of our livestock industry. The economic and societal impact of FMD on a trading nation is devastating; disease control costs can be astronomical and recovery from outbreaks prolonged. The disease is reportable federally and provincially. Early detection to facilitate rapid response and recovery is important.

If you have any concerns about animals on your farm please contact your local veterinarian and or the regional CFIA office or ARD office. Do not ask a neighbour or other producer to assist you in checking your animals.

For more information

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Information for Producers

