

What's Wrong With My Herd?
Part 7: Mycotoxins and mastitis [READ NOW](#)

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Foot-and-Mouth

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of cattle and swine. It also affects sheep, goats, deer, and other cloven-hooved ruminants. FMD is not recognised as a zoonotic disease.

The disease spreads very quickly if not controlled and because of this is a reportable disease.

Cause

The disease is caused by a virus of which there are seven 'types', each producing the same symptoms, and distinguishable only in the laboratory.

Immunity to one type does not protect an animal against other types.

The interval between exposure to infection and the appearance of symptoms varies between twenty-four hours and ten days, or even longer. The average time, under natural conditions, is three to six days.

The virus survives in lymph nodes and bone marrow at neutral pH, but is destroyed in muscle when pH is less than 6.0, i.e., after rigor mortis. The virus can persist in contaminated fodder and the environment for up to one month, depending on the temperature and pH conditions.

Airborne spread of the disease can take place and under favourable weather conditions the disease may be spread considerable distances by this route.

Animals pick up the virus either by direct contact with an infected animal or by contact with foodstuffs or other things which have been contaminated by such an animal, or by eating or coming into contact with some part of an infected carcass.

Outbreaks have been linked with the importation of infected meat and meat products.

The disease can also be spread by people, vehicles and other objects that have been contaminated by the virus.

Symptoms

- Fever
- Blisters in the mouth and on feet
- Drop in milk production
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite

Choose a Disease

Foot and Mouth

By Type:

Respiratory ▼

- Bluetongue
- BVD
- Calf Diphtheria
- Calf Pneumonia
- Fog Fever
- IBR
- TB
- Thrombosis
- Trypanosomosis

Metabolic ▼

OIE Reportable ▼

Enteric ▼

Neurological ▼

Reproductive ▼

Youngstock ▼

Skin, Eyes and Feet ▼

Udder ▼

Zoonoses ▼

Seasonal Picks

- Quivering lips and frothing of mouth
- Cows may develop blisters on teats
- Lameness

Treatment

Treatment is not given. Affected animals will recover. However because of the loss of production and the infectious state of the disease, infected animals are usually culled.

Prevention

FMD is one of the most difficult animal infections to control. Because the disease occurs in many parts of the world, there is always a chance of its accidental introduction into an unaffected country.

Export restrictions are often imposed on countries with known outbreaks.

FMD outbreaks are usually controlled by quarantines and movement restrictions, euthanasia of affected and in-contact animals, and cleansing and disinfection of affected premises, equipment and vehicles.

Infected carcasses must be disposed of safely by incineration, rendering, burial or other techniques. Milk from infected cows can be inactivated by heating to 100°C (212°F) for more than 20 minutes. Slurry can be heated to 67°C (153°F) for three minutes.

Rodents and other vectors may be killed to prevent them from mechanically disseminating the virus.

Good biosecurity measures should be practiced on uninfected farms to prevent entry of the virus.

Vaccination

Vaccination can be used to reduce the spread of FMD or protect specific animals.

Vaccines are also used in endemic regions to protect animals from clinical disease. FMDV vaccines must closely match the serotype and strain of the infecting strain.

Vaccination with one serotype does not protect the animal against other serotypes, and may not protect the animal completely or at all from other strains of the same serotype. Currently, there is no universal FMD vaccine.

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