

EXOTIC

Foot and mouth disease (general information)

Fact sheet

Introductory statement

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is **not found** in Australia. It is an acute, highly contagious viral infection of domestic and wild cloven-hoofed animals. Serious production losses can occur, but deaths are unlikely except among young animals.

Pigs are considered important amplifying hosts because of their susceptibility to oral infection and their capacity to excrete large amounts of virus. Cattle are considered good indicators of the presence of the disease because of their high sensitivity to infection. Sheep and goats are often considered maintenance hosts because disease can be present with few clinical signs.

Ruminants, but not pigs, can become carriers of the virus. The role of carrier animals in the transmission of FMD virus has been uncertain, and transmission from carrier to susceptible cattle has never been experimentally demonstrated. However, there is now clear evidence from Africa of transmission from carrier buffalo and cattle under field conditions.

Susceptible wild animals include cattle, buffalo, sheep, deer, pigs, goats, camels, native species such as marsupials, and rodents. The WHA fact sheet “Foot and Mouth Disease in Native Wildlife” presents information on FMD and Australian native animals. African buffalo are the only wildlife species, globally, to play a significant role in the epidemiology of FMD.

If you suspect a case of FMD you should immediately call the free **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline (1800 675 888)**.

References and other information

The latest information on FMD is available from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/Disease_cards/FOOT_AND_MOUTH_DISEASE.pdf and www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahm/2.01.08_FMD.pdf. OIE

detection, reporting and control measures are located at
www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_fmd.htm

The Disease Strategy for the control and eradication of foot-and-mouth disease, version 3.4, 2014 is available as part of the AUSVETPLAN series. Wildlife considerations are addressed in the Wild Animal Response Plan (WARS) of the AUSVETPLAN. Both can be found at: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/our-publications/ausvetplan-manuals-and-documents/

Information available on distribution and abundance of susceptible feral hosts in Australia can be accessed through “Distribution and abundance of significant invasive vertebrate pests” (2008)
www.pestsmart.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/West2008_3.pdf

The WHA fact sheet “Foot and Mouth Disease in Native Wildlife” presents information on FMD and Australian native animals (www.wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/FactSheets.aspx).

Acknowledgements

This sheet summarises information available in the WARS AUSVETPLAN: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au. We are grateful to those who have had input into this plan and Animal Health Australia who maintain the plan. The full AUSVETPLAN is available at: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au.

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To provide feedback on this fact sheet

Wildlife Health Australia would be very grateful for any feedback on this fact sheet. Please provide detailed comments or suggestions to admin@wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au. We would also like to hear from you if you have a particular area of expertise and would like to produce a fact sheet (or sheets) for the network (or update current sheets). A small amount of funding is available to facilitate this.

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