



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Foot-and-mouth disease: keep Australia free

Western Australia exports about 80% of its livestock and livestock products annually. Access to these markets depends on Australia being free of foot-and-mouth disease.

What is foot-and-mouth disease?

Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly infectious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed (two-toed) animals including sheep, cattle, pigs, goats, buffalo, camels, alpaca, llama and deer.

Affected animals may survive foot-and-mouth disease, but they take a long time to recover and often do not regain their full productivity. Surviving animals may also become carriers of the virus.

Foot-and-mouth disease could enter Australia by:

- illegally imported meat and dairy products being fed to pigs
- people returning from overseas with the virus on clothing, footwear or equipment.

What would an outbreak mean?

Western Australia exports about 80% of its livestock and livestock products every year. An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease would result in:

- closure of livestock export markets
- severe economic impact on the livestock industries and regional communities
- a cost of more than \$52 billion over 10 years.

What can you do?

- **Reduce the risk of an outbreak:**
 - Do not feed meat, swill or any other prohibited feeds to pigs.
 - Ensure overseas visitors to your farm wear clean clothes and disinfected shoes.
- **Know the signs** of foot-and-mouth disease.
- **Immediately report** any signs of foot-and-mouth disease to a vet.

Early reporting is key

Recognising and reporting foot-and-mouth disease early can help to contain its spread. Minimising spread will reduce the devastating economic and social costs of an outbreak to producers, the livestock industries (including abattoirs, saleyards, stock agents and transporters) and regional and national economy.

To report signs of the disease, call the:

- emergency animal disease hotline on **1800 675 888** or
- your Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) vet or
- your private vet.



Signs of foot-and-mouth disease: 1. Drooling in cattle. 2. Lesions on cattle gums. 3. Blisters (vesicles) on tongue. 4. Lesions between toes. 5. Lameness in sheep. 6. Lesions where sheep hoof meets leg. 7. Broken vesicle on sheep gum. 8. Lesion where pig hoof meets leg. 9. Vesicle on pig snout. Images 1–5, 7: EU-FMD; 6: DPIRD; 8-9: Foreign Animal Diseases, 7th Ed., US Animal Health Association.

How does foot-and-mouth disease spread?

Foot-and-mouth disease is highly contagious. The virus is present in large amounts in the blisters, saliva, urine, manure, milk and breath of infected animals.

The virus spreads between animals by:

- direct contact with an infected animal
- air-borne particles from infected animals
- movement of infected animals
- movement of contaminated animal products (such as wool or manure), vehicles, equipment and people.

The virus can survive in the environment for several weeks. Virus particles can remain in people's noses for up to 24 hours.

Animals usually show signs of foot-and-mouth disease within 3–5 days of infection, but signs can take up to 14 days to appear. Infected animals spread the virus before they show signs of the disease.

Important disclaimer

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Signs of foot-and-mouth disease

Signs of foot-and-mouth disease vary depending on the species infected and the virus strain. Signs of the disease include:

- blisters in the mouth, nostrils, teats or on the skin between and above the hoofs. (Blisters may not be obvious until they have ruptured.)
- slobbering/drooling
- lameness, reluctance to move
- lack of appetite
- reduced productivity
- sudden death in young animals
- a large drop in milk yield in dairy animals
- abortion in pigs.

In sheep, blisters are usually small and often difficult to see. The signs are often mild and lameness may be the only visible sign.

To report suspicious disease signs, call the:

- EAD hotline on **1800 675 888** or
- your DPIRD or private vet.