

Foot and Mouth Disease – Advice for Farmers



Fact Sheet 3

What will happen when
foot and mouth disease (FMD)
is suspected or confirmed

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs



Introduction

This leaflet describes:

- What you must do if you suspect that animals on your farm may be affected with FMD.
- How your suspicions are investigated and the restrictions are put in place during that investigation.
- What will happen if the disease is confirmed in your animals.
- What will need to happen to allow restrictions to be lifted and to return to normality.

What should I do if I suspect that animals on my farm may have FMD?

If you suspect disease in any of your animals you must contact your Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) as soon as possible by contacting your local Animal Health Divisional Office. To find the number of your local office, call the Defra helpline on: 08459 33 55 77, or visit our website at www.defra.gov.uk. Any delay could allow the disease to spread further.

After telling the DVM, you *must not move anything or allow anything to move from the premises that might spread disease*. Until the Veterinary Inspector arrives you should do the following:

- Lock your farm gates and put a 'Keep Out' sign at the entrance.
- Stop people or vehicles (e.g. milk tankers, feed or fuel deliveries) entering your farm. If any are already on the farm, ask them to remain there until the Veterinary Inspector arrives.
- Do not move any stock, crops or anything else off the premises.
- Make sure no animals can stray from, or onto, your farm.
- Make sure any goods delivered are unloaded at the farm gate.
- Make sure suspect animals are not moved on or across a public road.
- Collect together movement or other records which will help the investigation.

What will happen on my farm if disease is suspected there?

An Animal Health Veterinary Inspector will visit your animals as soon as possible and serve a Restriction Notice – Form EXD1 (FMD) – on the premises. These restrictions will remain in place until the Inspector has ruled out disease and advises you that they have been lifted.

The Restriction Notice explains exactly what you must do but in summary you will be asked to:

- Put up warning signs at the entrance to your premises – ‘Foot and Mouth Disease – Keep Out’.
- Keep records of animals on your premises.
- Prevent animals from straying from the area or building where the Veterinary Inspector asks you to keep them.
- Prevent the movement of any animals onto or off the premises.
- Provide a method of disinfection at the entrances and exits to the places where the animals are kept to help stop disease spreading.
- Prevent any vehicle, person, equipment or material, e.g. feed, slurry etc to move off the farm. If any movements are essential, contact the local office dealing with the investigation for advice (contact details will be on the EXD1 (FMD) Restriction Notice).
- Control rodents on the premises.



Read the conditions of the notice carefully and ask the Veterinary Inspector if you have any questions.

- The Veterinary Inspector will look at your animals and ask questions about how long they have been ill, if any animals have been moved on or off recently, etc. Try to gather this information while you are waiting for the vet to arrive.
- After they have examined your animals, the vet will make a telephone report to Defra HQ to discuss the case with veterinary advisers.
- If disease cannot be ruled out, tissue and blood samples will be collected from the affected animals including animals that may have died recently. Blood may be taken from others on the premises.
- The samples are sent to the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Surrey by the quickest means possible.
- **However, if the clinical signs are obviously due to FMD and the disease is already known to be present in the country, the disease may be confirmed at this stage by Defra HQ in consultation with the Veterinary Inspector on your farm.**

Until the laboratory results are known, you will remain under the EXD1 (FMD) Restriction Notice and it is essential you comply with the restrictions to minimise the risk of disease spreading.

What will happen around my premises while the disease is investigated?

On suspicion of disease the Secretary of State (or the Scottish Ministers or the Welsh Assembly in Scotland and Wales respectively) will make a Declaration establishing a Temporary Control Zone (TCZ) around your premises. This will be of a size considered necessary to prevent the spread of the disease.

Within the TCZ movements of animals to and from premises (including into or out of the zone) are not allowed. Farmers will be given advice on biosecurity and how to check their stocks regularly for signs of disease.

A Supplementary Movement Control Zone may also be established, restricting the movement of animals in a wider area.

These are temporary measures and the TCZ would not be expected to last more than a few days by which time the disease situation will be clearer.



What happens when disease is confirmed?

On the premises where disease is confirmed the following will happen as quickly as possible:

- A Veterinary Inspector will issue a Restriction Notice confirming disease (EXD2 (FMD)) and the restrictions on the premises will remain in force. The premises where the disease is confirmed is now known as an Infected Premises (IP)
- Culling – All susceptible animals will be humanely culled. Compensation will be paid for any animal slaughtered as prescribed by Schedule 3 of the Animal Health Act 1981 as determined by the valuer at the time of culling.
- Valuation – all animals will be valued by a Defra appointed valuer.
- Disposal – carcasses will be disposed either by rendering or incineration though other options are available, however on farm burial or burning will not be used in most cases.
- Preliminary Disinfection – this is a disinfectant spray to all parts of the premises where animals have been to damp down virus to minimise the risk of spread of disease.
- Veterinary investigation – even once the infected animals have been culled, inquiries must continue to establish where the disease came from and where it may have spread.

Actions around the Infected Premises

Another Declaration will be made, to establish a restricted area comprising a Protection Zone (PZ) which extends for at least 3 km around the Infected Premises (IP) and a Surveillance Zone (SZ) which extends for at least 10 km around the IP.

Within the PZ all premises containing livestock will be inspected by veterinary inspectors and will be subject to restrictions. This reduces the chance of potentially infected material leaving the premises until the disease status can be determined.

Within the SZ all premises containing livestock will be subject to movement restrictions.



Other measures

As a result of the veterinary investigation, other premises may be identified where the disease may have come from (source) or gone to (spread). These premises could be many miles from the IP. They will be placed under another Restriction Notice EXD 8(FMD).

- If the level of exposure is not deemed high enough to warrant culling, the animals will remain under restriction using Form EXD8(FMD). They will be regularly inspected for signs of disease.
- If, following a Veterinary Inspection, it is considered very likely that animals have been exposed to disease and will probably develop clinical signs, they will be valued and culled as quickly as possible. These premises are known as Dangerous Contacts (DC) and an EXD2(FMD) Restriction Notice will be served on them.

On all premises where animals are culled to control disease, cleansing and disinfection (C & D) must take place before new animals can be brought in to restock. The Animal Health Divisional Office will supervise the process to ensure that it has been undertaken to a satisfactory standard.

C & D usually involves cleaning areas and equipment with approved disinfectants but can also include the premises (or parts of the premises) remaining under restrictions for a long period, possibly up to 12 months to allow natural virus decay. This may be an option if you do not wish to undertake usual C & D.

FMD Emergency vaccination would be considered from the start of an outbreak of FMD if a veterinary risk assessment showed that measures additional to the basic slaughter policy were required to control the disease.

Lifting of Restrictions

EXD2(FMD) restrictions remain in place until either:

- The premises have been restocked and the animals show no signs of disease on clinical inspections and from lab test on samples. Restocking can only take place after a minimum interval after secondary C&D has been completed (the inspector will advise you how long this needs to be) **or**
- A longer period of time has elapsed after which restrictions are revoked and you may stock without licensing, inspections and sampling.

EXD8(FMD) restrictions remain in place until either:

- A minimum period of time has elapsed since they were exposed to possible infection **or**
- If the animals present have not shown any signs of disease and any samples taken are all negative.

Premises in Protection and Surveillance Zones

- The restrictions on these premises cannot be lifted until there is confidence that no disease is present, either on the premises or elsewhere within the Zones.
- Regular inspections will take place from the time the disease is suspected.
- The PZ cannot be merged with the surveillance zone until at least 15 days after preliminary cleansing and disinfection of the IP and then only if no disease is suspected or confirmed and the results of any samples taken are all negative.
- The SZ must remain in force for at least another 15 days although again it will remain in force if further disease is suspected or confirmed in the area.

Contact us

This document is also available on the Defra, Welsh Assembly Government and Scottish Executive websites.

For telephone and email enquiries for information on any aspect of Defra, Welsh Assembly Government or Scottish Executive work, the following helplines can be used:

Defra 08459 33 55 77. (local call rate number within the UK)

Welsh Assembly Government 02920 825 572

Scottish Executive 08459 33 55 77

From outside the UK the telephone number is:
+44(0)207238 6951.

There is also a minicom/textphone number for the deaf and hard of hearing: 0845 300 1998.

The Helpline email address is:
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone: 020 7238 6000
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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