



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 28/22

Foot and Mouth Disease Ruled Out in Suspect Case

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Background

You may be aware that disease in pigs was reported as suspect Foot and mouth disease (FMD) to APHA for investigation in June 2022.

Notifiable vesicular diseases of pigs including Foot and mouth disease (FMD), Swine vesicular disease and Vesicular stomatitis were all ruled out by testing and restrictions were lifted.

Action

This serves as a reminder of the need for vigilance for clinical signs of vesicular disease in pigs, and for suspect cases to be reported promptly. It is also worth noting that there is an ongoing FMD outbreak in Indonesia. In the event of entry into the UK it is absolutely vital to find and act on the first case of FMD as quickly as possible.

FMD, like other notifiable and non-notifiable viral causes of vesicular disease in pigs, is characterised by lameness and vesicular (blister) lesions which rapidly rupture. The lameness may affect one or all four feet. Vesicles may also occur on the snout and mouth and tend to rupture and heal rapidly. Foot lesions are more obvious than those on the snout or lips and involve the coronary bands of the hooves and accessory digits, and/or interdigital spaces. Ruptured lesions can form erosions and deep ulcerations.

Pig keepers should inspect their pigs at least once a day and be vigilant for lameness and foot or snout/mouth lesions. Pigs should be observed moving to be able to detect lameness as they may appear otherwise healthy. Inspection of lame pigs may require the feet to be washed to inspect the coronary band properly especially in wet conditions or

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where wallows are present. Snout lesions are more transient and may be harder to notice in an outdoor setting.

Where pigs develop lameness over a short period of time with coronary band foot lesions, these should be reported to APHA as suspect FMD/vesicular disease even if the vesicular stage is not seen, and no snout or mouth lesions are visible.

There are images of FMD in pigs on this link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eufmd/albums>

It is vital that any vesicular disease in pigs is reported immediately to APHA for official investigation to rule out notifiable disease. Prompt detection is important for rapid control.

Report notifiable disease by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

In Wales, contact 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, contact your local [Field Services Office](#).

APHA recommends that contact with other pigs should be avoided for 72 hours after people's last contact with pigs on premises affected with, or suspected to be affected with, vesicular disease.

As noted above, FMD has been detected in Indonesia this year, a country that was previously FMD-free (without vaccination). Failure to detect and control the initial clinical cases has led to the rapid spread of the disease across five main islands, including Bali. An outbreak assessment has been published by APHA's International Disease Monitoring Team: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foot-and-mouth-disease-in-south-east-asia>

It is illegal for travellers from Asia and other third country areas to bring meat or dairy products into the UK. Australia and other countries in the region will be concerned about the developments in Indonesia, with the large numbers of tourists who travel from the affected region to Australia.

Please continue to advise your pig-keeping clients to be strict regarding their pig premises biosecurity, address any weaknesses and report any increase in lameness promptly so it can be investigated by yourselves or, if vesicular disease is suspected, reported to APHA for investigation. Importantly, pig keepers and the public should be reminded that it is illegal to feed pigs meat or meat products, and kitchen or catering waste. Doing so endangers the health of the pigs and risks introducing exotic diseases, such as Foot and mouth disease or African swine fever, into the country. Useful biosecurity information and posters can be found at <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/biosecurity-on-pig-farms>