FACTS ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

What is FMD?

FMD is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of cloven hooved animals. The disease affects sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, deer, and also cloven hooved wild life species.



Cattle drinking from the same water source. This can lead to an outbreak if there are any infected animals in the herd

What are the common signs of FMD?

Vesicles (blisters) followed by lesions/erosions are seem in the mouth or on the feet (Shown in Figures 1 and 2).The erosions results into excessive salivation or lameness which are the best known signs of the disease.



FMD Lesions on the hoof of a pig



FMD lesions in cattle mouth

How is FMD spread?

FMD viruses can be spread by animals, people, or materials that bring the virus into physical contact with susceptible animals. An outbreak can occur when:

- Infected animals introduced into susceptible herds
- Contaminated facilities are used to hold susceptible animals
- Contaminated vehicles are used to move susceptible animals
- Raw or improperly cooked garbage containing meat or animal products from infected animals is fed to susceptible animals
- People wearing contaminated clothes or footwear, or using contaminated equipment, pass the virus to susceptible animals
- Susceptible animals are exposed to materials such as hay, feedstuffs, hides, or biologics contaminated with the virus.
- Susceptible animals drink from contaminated water (as emphasised in Figure 3)
- A susceptible animal is inseminated by semen from an infected animal

Other signs of FMD

- Marked rise in body temperature at 40oCfor 2 to 3 days,
- Production of sticky, foamy stringy saliva,
- Reduced consumption of feed due to painful tongue and mouth
- lesions
- Abortions
- Low milk production (dairy cows)
- Death, especially in newborn animals.

What Causes FMD?

The disease is caused by a virus popularly called the foot-and mouth disease virus.Signs of illness can appear after an incubation period of 1 to 8 days, but often develop within an average 3 days. The virus can persist in contaminated carcasses/meat, bones and even the environment for up to 1 month or more.

References

Literature adapted from APHIS, 2007. Foot-and-mouth disease, Services, Veterinary Services ,ed.

Prevention and Control

- Animals and animal products from areas affected should be prohibited entry into unaffected areas.
- Vaccination of susceptible animals every six months. Ring vaccination can also help contain the disease if it is used strategically to create barriers between FMD-infected zones and disease-free areas.
- Disinfection of contaminated premises (Bio-security)
- Quarantining of newly introduced animals.

What You Can Do?

You can support the Ugandan government efforts against FMD by:

- Watching for clinical signs mentioned above in your herd; and
- Immediately reporting any unusual or suspicious signs of disease to your veterinarian
- Observing quarantine restrictions

For more information:
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