

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE IN PIGS

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is one of the most contagious animal diseases and is caused by FMD virus. Although FMD occurs in many parts of the world, Australia is recognised as free from FMD without vaccination.

SIGNS

FMD affects domestic and wild cloven-hoofed animals including cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, deer and water buffalo. Horses are not susceptible. The virus is not a threat to human health.

In **pigs**, the clinical signs of FMD are variable and may include:

- Severe blisters and erosions on the feet resulting in lameness
- Detachment of the claw horn revealing painful exposed tissues
- Blisters and erosions on joints of limbs, resulting in knuckling
- Blisters on the snout, lips, tongue, inside the mouth and teats
- Abortion and death in young piglets
- +/- Fever (to 40.5°C)



Photo credit: USDA

HOW IS FMD TRANSMITTED?

FMD virus can be shed in the fluid of ruptured blisters, exhaled air, saliva, milk, semen, faeces and urine. Animals are infected by inhalation, ingestion and artificial or natural breeding. Whilst cattle are highly susceptible, pigs amplify the FMD virus with viral aerosols being 3000 times more concentrated than cattle. The incubation period is 14 days and infected animals can spread the virus before showing any clinical signs of disease. In contrast to ruminants, the primary mode of transmission in pigs is through infected feedstuffs, although direct contact and inhalation of contaminated aerosols also occurs. Illegal swill feeding of pigs is a significant risk factor. Movement of infected animals is one of the most important routes by which FMD spreads between herds and farms. Transmission easily occurs when animals are in close proximity. Contaminated clothing, equipment and vehicles can also spread the disease. The FMD virus can remain infective in the environment for several weeks to months in soil, manure, dried animal secretions, straw, hair and leather.

Source: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/service-industries-professionals/service-industries/veterinary-surgeons/foot-mouth-info/clinical-signs-pigs>

**If your livestock are showing signs of Foot-and-Mouth Disease,
immediately call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline
on 1800 675 888 (free call within Australia)**