

Gorst Rural

FMD UPDATE

Foot and Mouth Disease is a hot topic at present with grave concerns it is a matter of time, not when, this disease enters Australia.

LSD (Lumpy Skin Disease) is another exotic disease that has authorities on high alert.

LSD as it's name suggests – is diagnosed by lumps under the skin on cattle only, it is a pox virus spread by insects. Is currently in Indonesia but not yet in Australia.

FMD has far dire consequences to the entire livestock industry as all cloven-hoofed animals are susceptible to this exotic disease.

Transmission of this disease is rapid, even air-borne, with materials from infected animals spreading by various mechanisms. Travellers returning from Bali are a concern as infected material could be present on their footwear, clothing etc. Bali is now an official 'hot spot' for FMD.

The main transmission method within herds or flocks is by direct contact or via respiratory particles and droplet.

Cattle (indicator species) are highly susceptible to aerosol infection and readily display clinical signs. Sheep (maintenance species) are equally susceptible to aerosol infection but are less infectious and may not show obvious clinical signs. Pigs (amplifying species) are less susceptible to aerosol infection, but are potent amplifiers and excretors of the virus, especially in their breath. They serve as a significant source of virus to susceptible animals. Pigs frequently show obvious clinical signs.

The spread of FMD between properties and areas is often due to the movement of:

infected animals

contaminated vehicles, equipment, people and animal products.

Under certain weather conditions, infected aerosols can spread the virus many kilometers by wind.

FMD is not a threat to human health – it cannot be passed onto people through meat.

Cost to the Australian Livestock Industry and associated industries are estimated at circa \$80 Billion should FMD spread its wings in Australia.

The National Livestock Disease Taskforce along with the Federal Government estimate a 12% probability of FMD entering Australia as of July 2022.

Trends are the key – so the uncontrolled nature of FMD in Indonesia at present is the concern.

Australia is working with Indonesia at present to assist in their Biosecurity and Action Plan towards bringing FMD under control and then eradicate. This includes a vaccination roll out.

Vaccinations

LSD – there is a vaccine for LSD, it is a live vaccine so we would never introduce this into Australia before disease detection.

FMD – is a killed vaccine, however due to trade status would not be introduced into Australia prior to any detection of FMD. Our trade status for importers is a tiered level.

There is a vaccine bank in the UK (Owned by Australia) which has the ability to produce 1 million doses in a week should we require.

There are 7 distinct serotypes of FMD virus, the vaccine covers 5 serotypes.

Symptoms

Lameness, drooling from mouth, blistering and lesions (feet and mouth), skin peeling off at tongue.

Incubation period is typically 14 days, however this can vary according to various factors such as stock movement, virus strain, conditions, species etc

Virus Persistence

Can remain infective in the environment for several weeks and possibly longer in the presence of organic matter, such as soil, manure, dried animal secretions. Can also persist on chemically inert materials such as straw, leather and hair.

Prevention

Measures around education & awareness. Defence in depth at the border (biosecurity). Assisting Indonesia to get under control.

Federal Govt processes to stop FMD entering Australia - increased screening. Anyone returning from Indonesia do not allow on your farm for at least 7 days Control

Naïve animals (such as in Australia) are far more susceptible, and the spread is rapid.

Should we have FMD diagnosed the control strategies include a livestock standstill.

Livestock standstill includes saleyards followed by restrictions on other movements (eg livestock carriers, stock feed, milk tankers, etc).

Infected properties under immediate quarantine with no movement of any stock off these properties – stock would need to be slaughtered on the property.

Ramifications would be devastating as is well documented. Export of livestock and associated products would cease.

Movement of livestock and associated industry activity would be at a standstill.

Feed & Crops – the cancellation of feed imports from Indonesia has already occurred so we would expect the same (depending on destination).

Compensation funds from the Govt would be formula based, taken on livestock value prior to infection. This has been industry driven by the NFF and other industry bodies.

Insurance cover would be unlikely.

Victoria is the “Perfect Storm” given our high density of livestock, livestock movements, conditions etc plus the fact 70% of our livestock products are exported.

Outlook

This varies amongst certain industry bodies – a suggested travel ban to Indonesia (particularly Bali) has been knocked on the head for now in fear of damaging trade relations with Indonesia.

Certain views are that it is imminent.

The more optimistic outlook is that biosecurity measures have been tightened significantly off an already high base and that Australian Industry representatives are working

closely with Indonesia to do everything possible to prevent FMD (and LSD) entering Australia.

Farm Biosecurity

With the current situation creating a lot of noise around the risk of FMD and LSD, it is important to focus on what we can control.

A good biosecurity plan and adherence is one thing we can all do to protect each other.

It can be very simple...

Risk assessment completed prior to farm gate entry

Entry & Exit hygiene ... come clean, go clean

Please refer to the link below:

<https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au>

For now, business as usual (or unusual!) ... but have a plan!

Robbie Neale – Senior Livestock Advisor Gorst Rural