



Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

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fact sheet

What is FMD?

Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) is a dangerous disease that affects cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goats and wildlife. FMD is caused by a virus that is highly contagious among livestock and can cause serious economic losses to farmers.

Newborn and young animals are very susceptible to FMD and may show a high death loss. Pregnant animals may abort. Older animals are less likely to die, but their productivity and usefulness to the farmer are greatly reduced. Farmers who depend on their cattle for plowing, threshing or transporting goods to market may suffer considerably if FMD affects their animals.



How is FMD transmitted?

Affected animals transmit the virus through:

- their breath
- saliva
- feces and urine
- milk

Animals can become sick by inhaling the infectious agent in the air or eating it from contaminated feeds, floors, or pens. Even animals far away can sometimes be infected if the breath of infected animals is carried by the wind.



What are the signs of FMD?

The first signs of disease are:

- fever
- a loss of appetite
- a reduction in milk production
- possibly shivering

Two to three days later:

- drooling
- blisters on the mouth and tongue, the feet and the teats
- smacking noises of the lips and grinding of the teeth
- difficulty in eating
- stamping of the feet
- lameness which can be mild to severe



What can we do to control FMD in Afghanistan?

The best way to prevent FMD is to vaccinate livestock. The first time animals are vaccinated, they should receive a 2nd injection one month later, then every 6 months after that.

Affected animals should be separated and isolated from healthy animals. New animals should be isolated for 14 days before mixing with other animals to be sure they are not incubating the FMD infection.

IMPORTANT: Animals that die should be burned or buried. Restriction of movement of all the animals when FMD is suspected or confirmed is crucial to controlling the spread of the disease.

Developed from “Farmer Sheet on Anthrax”, Dutch Committee for Afghanistan <http://www.dca-vet.nl/>, by H. Zornetzer 2007

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