



NDCC Foot and mouth disease Update 1 of 2026

1. Foot and mouth disease (FMD) confirmed in the Republic of Cyprus

- The Cyprian authorities confirmed the first outbreak of FMD in the Republic of Cyprus on 20th February 2026.
 - The outbreak occurred on a cattle farm in Larnaca.
 - This is the first outbreak of FMD to be confirmed in the Republic of Cyprus since 2007.
 - As of 2nd March 2026, there have been 10 further cases in the Larnaca.
 - Cases are rising daily.
 - All outbreaks reported to WOAHP to date have been confirmed as SAT 1 FMD.
 - Cypriot authorities have applied strict control measures in line with EU regulations.
- Further information: [WAHIS](#)

Figure 1: Location of Republic of Cyprus



- **There have been no movements of FMD-susceptible species (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, buffalo, camelids) into Ireland from Cyprus in at least the last 3 years.**

2. Information on Foot and Mouth disease

- Foot and mouth disease (FMD) caused by the foot and mouth disease virus (FMDV), is one of the most **highly contagious diseases of livestock**.
- FMD virus affects many species of animals including **cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, deer and other cloven-hoofed animals** (that is, animals with a divided hoof). On rare occasions other species may also be affected.
- FMD virus **does not pose a risk to human health or food safety**.



- FMD virus is found in **all excretions and secretions from infected animals**. Infected animals shed the virus in blister fluid, saliva, milk, expired air, urine and faeces. Animals can shed the virus before clinical signs appear.
- **Foot and mouth disease virus (FMDV) is shed in very high amounts in all animal secretions (blister fluid, saliva, milk, expired air, urine, faeces,), and hence is highly transmissible via:**
- **Direct contact:** Between an infected and a susceptible animal.
- **Indirect contact:** Spread via contaminated vehicles, equipment, clothing, footwear, feed.
- **Airborne spread:** Infected animals, particularly pigs, can exhale significant amount of virus in their breath; animals on other farms downwind may become infected by this route.

There is currently no treatment for FMD. Vaccination against FMD is undertaken only some countries where FMDV is endemic. No routine vaccination against FMD is currently taking place in Europe.

3. FMD – Worldwide Update

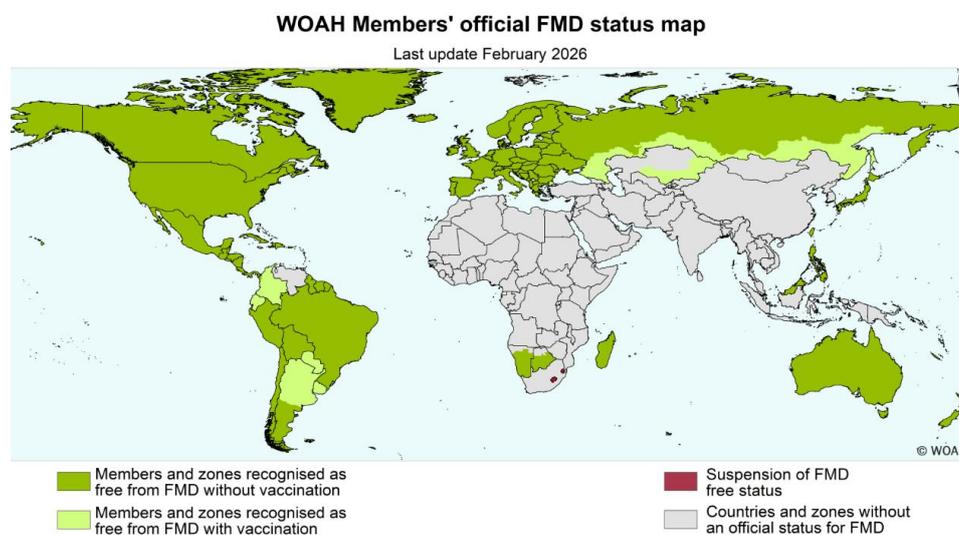
FMD is a transboundary animal disease that can occur sporadically in any typically free area.

The disease is estimated to circulate in 77% of the global livestock population, in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, as well as in a limited area of South America. In many of these countries FMD is endemic (constantly present), and countries do not have an official FMD status.

Other countries are declared free from FMD with or without vaccination (including Ireland). Free status is suspended in the face of FMD outbreaks (*Figure 4*).

To date, since the beginning of 2026 additional outbreaks of FMD have been reported in the Middle East (Turkey, Lebanon and Israel), Asia (South Korea, Mongolia, Indonesia and Malaysia), Algeria and many countries in southern Africa (Lesothos, South Africa, Botswana, Eswatinin, Mozambique and Zimbabwe). This highlights that FMD is an ongoing and active worldwide problem which, due to the ability of FMD virus to spread easily, means incursions into Ireland and the EU are an ongoing risk.

Figure 2 detailing the WOAHP official FMD status of WOAHP member countries.



Source: [fmd-world-eng-2025.png \(7012x4019\)](#)



4. Clinical signs of FMD

- FMD virus causes **fluid-filled blisters to develop on the tongue, dental pad, nose and feet of affected animals**. These can be very painful, and affected animals become lame, go off their food and salivate excessively. Animals develop a fever just before the blisters appear. Eventually the fluid-filled blisters burst leaving an open sore. These can be difficult to spot and may rupture or the horn or may completely detach (*Figures below*).
- **The disease is severe in pigs and cattle but can be difficult to spot in sheep.**
- Pigs infected with FMD are considered ‘amplifier hosts’ of the virus. They can produce millions of infectious doses of FMD virus in their excretions and secretions daily, which can lead to significant FMD transmission.
- Most adult animals will recover from FMD after 10-14 days, however, dairy cattle may never return to their previous milk yield.
- Clinical signs of FMD can include:
 - Fever
 - Loss of appetite
 - Excessive salivation and lip smacking
 - Lameness
 - Reduced milk yield
 - Abortion
 - High mortality (sudden death without clinical signs) in young animals, (particularly piglets and lambs)
 - Pigs may huddle together
 - Blisters visible in the mouth, between toes and at heels

FMD lesions in cattle. (L) Ruptured blister on the tongue. (R) Lesion on the coronary band



FMD lesions in sheep. (L) Ruptured blister in the digital pad. (R) Lesion on the foot



*FMD lesions in pigs. (L) Detachment of the claw from the coronary band (“thimbling”).
(R) Blisters on the snout*



(Source: [EuFMD Lesion Library](#)).

Additional images of the clinical signs of FMD in cattle, pigs, sheep and goats from the EuFMD Lesion Library can be found [here](#)

5. What this means for Ireland

- Ireland is currently free from FMD.
- Strict rules are in place to prevent the entry of FMD into Ireland and in other European countries. Stringent measures are activated in the event of an outbreak. Control measures are underpinned by European legislation.
- Susceptible species of live animals and animal products entering Ireland from third countries (outside Europe) must comply with stringent import control requirements and undergo inspection in a designated Border Control Post supervised by DAFM. Livestock and animal products from European countries must meet certification requirements for intra-EU trade.
- **FMD is one of the most contagious diseases of animals.**
 - Biosecurity is a critical control measure to prevent infection with FMD
- **FMD could be introduced to Ireland through a number of routes:**
 - Illegal imports of contaminated food (meat, dairy) products.
→ Food waste infected with the FMD virus being consumed by FMD susceptible animals represents the most significant risk pathway for a disease incursion into Ireland.
 - Import of infected animals.
 - Contaminated vehicles, equipment, clothing, footwear.
 - Airborne: FMDV can be spread up to 60 km overland and 300 km



6. Advice for Livestock owners



NEVER FEED FOOD WASTE TO LIVESTOCK

- It is **illegal to feed food waste** which contains meat or may have been in contact with meat to livestock.
- **Food waste (swill) including kitchen waste and catering waste must be disposed of carefully** away from livestock. Bins must be located in a secure location and sealed to ensure that vermin, birds or other animals do not carry food waste into areas where livestock are kept.
- Livestock owners in Ireland are advised to implement **biosecurity measures** to mitigate the risk of an outbreak of the disease in this country such as establishing disinfectant points. **Anyone coming from an FMD affected region** should avoid entering a farm for **14 days following arrival in Ireland** to prevent the risk of contaminated clothing, footwear, vehicles or equipment coming into contact with livestock.
- Any suspicions of FMD must be reported to the local [Regional Veterinary Office](#) during normal office hours or the National Disease Emergency Hotline at 01 4928026 (outside of normal office hours) without delay.

7. Advice for Travellers

Humans play an important role in spreading FMD

Anyone arriving in Ireland following contact with susceptible species of animals in FMD affected areas must take biosecurity precautions. The FMD virus can be brought into free areas through introduction of contaminated meat, dairy and materials such as clothing, shoes, equipment, etc.

- **It is illegal to bring meat or dairy into Ireland** from outside the EU. Strict rules are in place for the importation of such products, e.g., must come from approved countries/ regions, must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate and undergo checks by officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in a Border Control Post
- Meat and dairy may not be brought into the EU as personal consignments, e.g., in airplane baggage or through the postal service.
- **Do not bring meat or dairy products onto Irish farms**
- Always use a **secure bin to dispose of waste food**, so that it cannot be accessed by farm animals, wild animals, or wild birds
- Food waste infected with the FMD virus being consumed by FMD susceptible animals represents the most significant risk pathway for a disease incursion into Ireland. It is illegal to feed food waste to livestock.
- Travellers coming back from FMD affected countries must be vigilant to avoid inadvertently bringing back the disease to Ireland via FMD contaminated meat or dairy products, clothing, footwear, vehicles or equipment.



- Strict rules are in place to prevent the entry of FMD into Ireland and in other European countries. Stringent measures are activated in the event of an outbreak. Control measures are underpinned by European legislation.

If you have been in a country where FMD is present, it is critically important that the guidelines outlined below are followed



FMD is a notifiable disease, therefore, any suspicion of disease must be reported to the local [Regional Veterinary Office \(RVO\)](#) without delay.

Prior to arrival in Ireland:

- Avoid visiting livestock farms or other places where livestock or wildlife are kept
- Shower or bathe prior to travel paying particular attention to fingernails and hair
- Any clothing used while visiting livestock farms, wildlife areas or zoos should be washed with detergent at 60°C minimum or professionally dry-cleaned
- Clean any jewellery, watches, phones, iPads etc. with a disinfectant wipe if they were brought onto farms
- Thoroughly clean all footwear before arriving in Ireland
- Remember: it is illegal to bring back meat or dairy products into the EU.

Upon arrival in Ireland:

- If arriving into Dublin or Shannon Airport, you should visit the DAFM office prior to leaving baggage reclaim. If the office is closed, or you are entering Ireland through a different location, you should contact your nearest Regional Veterinary Office during normal office hours for advice.
- **If you have been on livestock farms, wildlife areas or zoos in FMD affected countries, avoid all contact with livestock or wildlife for at least 14 days following arrival in Ireland – no exceptions!**
- Ensure that clothes brought with you on your trip have been thoroughly washed with detergent at 60°C minimum or professionally dry cleaned before wearing them in Ireland. Footwear should be cleaned and disinfected using a product proven to be effective against FMD virus as per the manufacturer’s instructions.
- It is recommended that DAFM is pre-notified of the intended arrival into Ireland of travellers who have been in contact with livestock or susceptible wildlife in FMD affected areas. Details on how to pre-notify DAFM can be found below. If entering through:



- Dublin Airport: Contact the DAFM duty officer by calling + 353 (0) 87 417 8986. If you need to contact a DAFM officer on arrival in Dublin Airport, you may do so by pressing the button marked Duty Supervisor on the courtesy telephone outside the Department of Agriculture offices in the baggage reclaim hall, opposite:
 - Carousel No. 6 in Terminal 1, or
 - Carousel No. 2 in Terminal 2.
 - Shannon Airport: Contact the Portal Inspector on duty by calling on +353 61 500 940 or by emailing PetsShannon@agriculture.gov.ie
 - Other entry points to Ireland: Contact the local Regional Veterinary Office. Contact details can be found here: [Contact the Department](#)
-
- **A leaflet with information for travellers may be found [here](#).**