



AABP/AVC FAD TASK FORCE: PROTECTING THE VETERINARY BUSINESS



PURPOSE/SCOPE

Private practice veterinarians are a tremendous resource for their clients and the local community preparing for and responding to a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak. Veterinarians should be prepared to safely and effectively continue providing services to their clients and maintain clinic business continuity in the face of an FAD outbreak. Depending on the type and scope of an outbreak, private practice veterinarians might also be requested to assist in the response.

In the event of an FAD emergency, specific disease control actions for animal owners/managers and veterinarians will be communicated by state and federal animal health officials. These disease control actions include, but are not limited to, stop-movement, quarantine, test administration and interpretation, and animal depopulation and disposal. It is expected that resources will be prioritized to meet the needs of disease control areas around infected premises. Fewer resources will be available for animal owners/managers and veterinarians located outside of disease control areas.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for veterinary practices that are NOT within disease control areas to maintain essential public and private veterinary services (both haul-in and farm-call services) throughout an FAD emergency while implementing and maintaining critical biosecurity protocols to eliminate potential disease spread. Highlighting business continuity issues for clinics, including personnel and resources management, the document also provides information for common communication needs beginning on day one of an FAD outbreak outside of the immediate practice area. If an FAD is suspected on one of your client's operations, there are separate guidance steps that should be followed.

DAY 1: CONFIRMATION NOTIFICATION AND 72-HOUR MOVEMENT STANDSTILL

The US emergency response to FAD emergencies involves a partnership between government (federal, state, tribal, local) and private sector (industry, veterinarians). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) will notify the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO), industry and the public upon a confirmed FAD such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

One strategy to control and contain FMD involves

movement restrictions of susceptible livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, deer, bison) and their products (semen, embryos, possibly milk). USDA recommends a 72-hour national movement standstill following the first U.S. diagnosis of FMD. Control Areas will be established based on characteristics of the infected premises. Once the national movement standstill lifts, movement restrictions may remain for the regulatory Control Area(s) to limit risk of disease spread. Movement into, within, or out of Control Area(s) will be by permit only and based on the risk posed by that movement and the premises' ability to meet permit requirements. For more information, please see *Managed Movement of Susceptible Livestock Species in the U.S. during a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak*^{a,b}.

Examples of movements that may stop for 72 hours (or longer) include transportation of animals to and from veterinary clinics, shows, exhibitions, embryo donors/recipients, rodeos, sale barns, bull sales, packing plants and newborn dairy calves. If there are species that are not susceptible to the virus, but could be vectors or fomites, their movement may be restricted, too. Examples include horses going to ropings, rodeos, fairs, working dogs, etc. During the 72-hour period, it is unlikely permits will be granted to move livestock. Veterinarians should be prepared to go to farms/ranches/livestock operations to perform procedures during the standstill period.

- After the standstill period is lifted, all cattle and germplasm (semen, embryos) movement within, into or out of a Control Area will require a movement permit issued by State Animal Health Officials (SAHOs). Permits will be issued on a case-by-case basis upon evaluation of risk of spreading the FAD.
- Producers with multiple locations will need to acquire a permit to move cattle from one location to another if one of the locations is in a Control Area. The exception would be if the cattle can be moved without contacting (even by road) any other animals.
- Animal movement records are still recommended even if the producer is able to move without a permit.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR THE VETERINARY CLINIC'S BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Veterinarians should be aware of business continuity issues for their practice, including personnel and resources management, biosecurity and communication needs. Prior to an FAD event, develop an enhanced



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biosecurity plan for the practice, develop contingencies if an animal within the clinic tests positive or if the practice is within a regulatory control area, and in the event the veterinarian is involved in an FAD investigation. The following will assist as you plan for maintaining essential public and private veterinary services (both haul-in and farm-call services) throughout an FAD emergency. Recommendations for implementing and maintaining critical biosecurity protocols to eliminate potential disease spread as well as obtaining timely, accurate information or answering some common questions you may receive are also described:

■ **Know who your SAHO^c and APHIS Area Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC)^d/Veterinary Medical Officers (VMOs) are prior to an FAD emergency.** It would be beneficial to already have an established working relationship. Both can be a resource of information, answer regulatory related and other questions, and are the contact points if you suspect an FAD in one of your client's animals. Also, SAHOs in a state or region with the FAD may want to provide more timely and targeted updates, advice and communication to practitioners during an FAD response than would be provided via broad public announcements. Accredited veterinarians may be requested to assist in the surveillance and response efforts.

■ **Veterinarians are considered essential workers and will not be subject to “stop movement,” but will not be issuing Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) for 72 hours, maybe longer, if the Control Area is located in your state but not in the practice area.**

- Practitioners can still examine, collect samples, educate, provide herd health and things that do not require animal movement-related activities; no haul-ins (surgery, embryo transfer, bull testing, processing, calves on fluids, etc., see below) will be allowed during the 72-hour standstill.

■ **Clear, consistent and accurate communication to staff, clients and the community will be key to the clinic's business continuity.** This will assist staff to ably perform their duties and understand risks for their own animals during an FAD, provide useful and accurate information to clients as well as be a resource to the public, minimizing fear of the unknown and assisting to decrease spread of the FAD. Some frequently answered questions can be found below.

■ **Manage appointments/calls—looking at it from a risk-management perspective**

- Prioritizing emergencies vs. delay of routine visits. Take into consideration the species on the operation, type of procedure(s) needed, resources to assist on site to ensure safe handling of the animal, and personnel.
- For instance, if tuberculosis testing was underway pre-outbreak, cattle will still need to be examined. However, new tuberculosis testing may not be initiated.

■ Telehealth may be an option for certain types of calls. Look into what is allowed in the state(s) you are licensed to practice and develop a contingency plan accordingly.

■ Work with those answering phones on the types of questions to ask to determine urgency, needs and short- and long-term impacts of postponing a visit. Some questions to consider include:

- What species are on the farm/ranch/feedlot? Even if going to examine a horse or a Border Collie, are there animals susceptible to the disease of concern?
- What clinical signs have been observed? Is the caller concerned it might be the FAD recently diagnosed? There will be cases of the “worried-well” and calls may increase to examine animals for lesions, off-feed, increased lameness, death, etc. Keep in mind the resources that exist to assist with possible FAD calls and ensure the personnel answering phones have the FAD “hot-line” number to call. If you visit the operation and are suspicious of the FAD, you may be guided to cease livestock calls for the remainder of the day as the investigation unfolds.

■ **Consider curbside protocols like those used during COVID-19.** If clients have livestock subject to the quarantine, minimize the need for clinic entry (bring medications, semen, embryos to their vehicle as appropriate).

■ **Any patient's physical contact should be limited to only what is absolutely necessary,** and staff should always wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and wash their hands between animals from different operations.

■ **Considerations for clinic staff biosecurity**



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- Does the facility/clinic have a written biosecurity plan and procedures?
- Do employees and volunteers receive biosecurity training?
- Do employees and volunteers change into dedicated work clothing/outerwear onsite? Is work-provided clothing laundered onsite, or is it taken home with employees?
- What personal protective equipment (such as boots, gloves, coveralls and masks) do you provide? Are there standard methods for donning and doffing and subsequent disinfection?
- What instructions and cautions are provided for staff as pet and livestock owners and/or caretakers?
- Are there protocols (such as showering, changing clothes, or avoiding extraneous livestock/ranch contact) for people who visit livestock operations?

■ Guidance for clinic staff biosecurity

- If some movement or haul-in work is allowed, designate an exam room and working space at the clinic for affected species appointments only. Only accept emergency and essential cases.
- Make such appointments at the end of the day or after hours.
- Limit staff contact with affected species.
- Properly dispose of and disinfect all medical equipment and laundry used for these appointments.
- Make sure the disinfectant used at the clinic is effective. Follow use of application guidelines, especially relevant to strength and contact time.
- Minimize use of cell phones and other personal property during high-risk appointments.
- Use proper PPE including gowns, foot coverings, masks, gloves and eye protection. Instruct staff on donning and doffing PPE. Develop protocols for handling exposed PPE materials. Teach staff and clients about how pathogens are spread and how to reduce the spread of the disease.
- Develop protocols and training to disinfect equipment, work spaces and vehicles.

ENHANCED BIOSECURITY FOR FARM CALLS/VISITS

- **Biosecurity steps must be enhanced during an FMD outbreak on all livestock operations.** In the

early stages of an outbreak, when it is largely unknown how widespread the outbreak may be, extra vigilance will be needed by all people visiting livestock operations. Veterinarians must consider the transmissibility of FMD and take actions to prevent their clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicle from becoming fomites. Consider taking the following actions prior to and upon arrival at each susceptible animal premises as routine enhance biosecurity when FMD is not known to be in your practice area but has been identified in the U.S.:

- Ensure that the inside of the vehicle is clean (free of all animal manure/excrement) and has not become contaminated by soiled clothes, footwear or other items. Do not bring personal pets or animals to the premises.
 - Create zones in the vehicle—one area for clean clothing, one for soiled, preferably in a sealable tote to prevent cross-contamination
 - Shower and change into clean clothes and footwear prior to arrival on the operation.
- Wear operation-dedicated clothing and footwear, or
- Wear clean coveralls/disposable protective outerwear and disposable or disinfectable footwear; and
- Ensure hands are clean (wash hands and/or wear disposable or disinfectable gloves over clean hands).
- **In the event a client calls with concerns regarding their animals have lesions or signs that could be an FAD, contact your state and federal animal health officials prior to making a farm visit.** They will guide you to take precautions like those shown in the USDA videos^{e,f} if you are part of an FAD investigation.
- **Increased biosecurity for veterinary vehicles and any equipment taken between livestock operations will be needed to prevent disease spread.**
 - Vehicles driving in animal areas or sharing drive paths with on-farm vehicles that enter animal areas should not enter another livestock premises unless the tires, wheel wells and undercarriage are cleaned (washed, scrubbed as needed) and disinfected. This can take extra time so consider available resources if this approach is used. Other considerations include the floor mats and any contact surfaces inside the vehicle pending the ability to follow the personal biosecurity recommendations above.



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Options for managing “zones” in the veterinary vehicle.
Top: Maintain a clean zone, keeping dirty clothes/outerwear and footwear out. Wash hands before entry.
Above: Use containers for soaking clean boots/footwear in disinfectant between calls (cover/seal before driving). Separate container for dirty clothes/outerwear/coveralls. (Source DBWeddle)

- Alternatively, leaving the veterinary vehicle outside the animal areas or drive paths, using on-farm vehicles or walking to the animals needing care is an option. Coordinate ahead of time with farm/ranch personnel, especially if chutes, panels or other large equipment is needed.

- **Clients may request down time between visits** – see contingency planning.
- **Be sure to use disinfectants^g labeled for the FAD of concern.**

BIOSECURITY FOR HAUL-IN CLINICS

- If a 72-hour national movement standstill or longer is put in place, this means no livestock can move off of a farm for any reason. Clinic haul-in facilities will NOT be able to be used during this time. Contingency planning should be thought of in advance that will assist in allowing veterinary clinics to continue to operate and serve the needs of clients on an emergency basis. Part of this planning includes safety for procedures that must be done on farm. This needs to be considered, such as will you haul your own chute/panels? Is additional help needed to accomplish this? Plans should include baby calves that may need to be IV'd on farm, fixing broken legs, c-sections that currently are done in house. No movement is exactly what it says, “no movement of animals.”
- Contingency planning must include down time for proper cleaning and disinfection between appointments. Once the standstill is lifted and appointments begin again, this needs to be taken into consideration by the person scheduling the appointments. They should be scheduled to allow for cleaning and disinfection with down time between clients and communicate the appropriate amount of time. Cleaning includes removal of all bedding and manure and washing down any residual matter left from the animals followed by the use of a proper disinfectant labeled for the FAD of concern (see above reference).

RESOURCES FOR CURRENT INFORMATION DURING AN FMD OUTBREAK

A reliable resource for general FMD information was developed by the national livestock industry FMD Cross-Species Team, representing beef, pork, dairy and sheep, in collaboration with APHIS^h. This can be a resource for general client



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and community questions you will receive. APHIS provides more information about FMD in a factsheetⁱ and etiology/ecology of the virus^j.

In the event of an FMD outbreak, USDA APHIS VS, the APHIS AVIC and the SAHO(s) where the outbreak(s) are located will most likely provide daily updates early in the outbreak on questions such as where is the disease/is it spreading, updates to movement restrictions and permitting requirements, is there a vaccine and who can use it, details of a surveillance plan, etc. USDA APHIS is the lead federal agency for incident management during an FAD involving livestock and remains the overall lead when support is requested from other federal departments or agencies.

The comprehensive USDA *FMD Disease Response Plan Red Book*^k provides the U.S. Government's current FMD preparedness and response plan, while additional FMD specific preparedness information, standard operating procedures, ready reference guides, strategy and policy documents, etc. are available at USDA APHIS | Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)^l. Additional APHIS FAD and emergency management resources are provided at USDA APHIS | FAD PReP Materials and References^m. Below are some frequently asked questions on movement of animals or products during the initial 72-hour standstill for an FMD event as well as Secure Food Supply Plans for livestock and poultry industry business continuity.

FAQS ON MOVEMENT QUESTIONS FROM CLIENTS

Q: What animals are included in the 72-hour movement standstill for FMD?

A: The issuance by the state or USDA will describe it. For FMD, this could include all susceptible animals (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, cervids) and their products (semen, embryos, manure, possibly milk if the state deems it high-risk). The age or production stage of the animal does not matter—newborn calves, bred heifers, bulls, embryo donors/recipients, railers at the feedyard, fat cattle to slaughter, cows to pasture or rangeland and back. No movement means no movement until the standstill is lifted.

Q: Can manure be spread, knifed, or pumped during 72-hour standstill?

A: FMD virus can survive in manure for up to 10 weeks, and in water and on surfaces for up to one month,

depending on weather conditions. Under certain conditions wind can also spread the virusⁿ. During the standstill, the goal is to limit spread of the virus until more information is known. Manure poses a risk. Long distance hauling could put other animals at risk so it is unlikely movement will be allowed. Encourage clients to contact their State Animal Health Official for the definitive guidance.

Q: Is there concern of spread of FMD from manure to wildlife (deer, feral pigs, bighorn sheep, bison, elk, antelope, moose, etc.)?

A: Yes, FMD virus can survive in manure and if spread in areas where wildlife co-exist, they can become infected. Their role in transmission to other livestock species varies depending on the species.

Q: Can milk be moved down the road to the calf raising facility from the milking facility past other animal farms?

A: During the initial 72-hour standstill, the state will provide the list of restricted movements. If milk is deemed a risk, it too could be stopped for a period of time. Producers are encouraged to have contingency plans^o in place in the event animal or product movement is stopped for a period of time.

Q: Will oocytes or embryos be allowed to move during the 72-hour standstill?

A: Unlikely, as they are considered live animals by USDA definition. Veterinary clinics with embryo transfer clients should communicate with them upon announcement of the standstill and develop contingency plans for animals that have been superovulated or are ready to breed. There is enhanced biosecurity guidance in the Secure Beef^r and Secure Milk^s Supply Plans regarding semen and embryo biosecurity during an FMD outbreak based on guidance from the World Organization for Animal Health. Additional business continuity and risk mitigation planning is underway for semen production centers, embryo transfer and recipient herds.

SECURE FOOD SUPPLY PLANS RESOURCES

- The industry, USDA, State Animal Health Officials and several universities collaborated to develop continuity of business (COB) guidance for farms that produce milk, beef, pork, and sheep/wool. These Secure Food Supply Plans include enhanced



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biosecurity planning for each respective industry. An enhanced biosecurity plan increases individual preparedness to maintain COB in the face of an FMD outbreak. Although it is voluntary, it describes enhanced biosecurity steps that producers can put into place to help protect their cattle. It gives dairy producers an opportunity to keep shipping milk and beef and pork producers an opportunity to move animals to market and keep their business running in the event of FMD entering the U.S. An APHIS overview of business continuity and the role of Secure Supply Plans^q can be found at *Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Response Ready Reference Guide—Overview of Continuity of Business and the Secure Food Supply Plans*.

- Producers and ranchers are encouraged to develop a written, site-specific plan with items that can be put in place prior to an outbreak to limit disease exposure. There are additional enhanced steps that will

further limit exposure if FMD is diagnosed in the U.S. Some State Animal Health Officials have a process to review plans prior to an outbreak. Building relationships with State Animal Health Officials prior to an outbreak builds trust and confidence when requesting movement permits during an outbreak. Each has a tab dedicated to “Veterinarians” that aligns with the producer content.

- **Veterinarians could encourage all livestock clients to keep a log^{t,u} of who is on their farm and when before an FMD outbreak occurs.** This includes movement of livestock on and off the farm, vehicles and equipment movement, as well as visitor movement.

For producers who are part of the Beef Quality Assurance program or the National Milk Producers Federation Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) program, these forms can be used for those purposes as well.

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Additional Resources

- ^a Managed Movement of Susceptible Livestock Species in the U.S. during a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak: Overview, November 2019: <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/pdf-library/FMD-Resources/disease-fmd-sfs-managed-movement-overview.pdf>
- ^b Managed Movement of Susceptible Livestock Species in the U.S. during a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak: Considerations for Regulatory Officials, November 2019: <https://bit.ly/3EOLQD>
- ^c State Animal Health Officials (SAHO): <https://usaha.org/federal-and-state-animal-health>
- ^d APHIS Area Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC): <https://bit.ly/3yHIZCV>
- ^e USDA APHIS, Texas A&M Center for Educational Technologies, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, FADD PPE Unassisted Donning: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/213904934>
- ^f USDA APHIS, Texas A&M Center for Educational Technologies, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, FADD PPE Unassisted Doffing: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/213905071>
- ^g USDA APHIS Disinfectants for Use Against Animal Disease Causative Agents: <https://bit.ly/3MwBROg>
- ^h Cross-species Communication Foot and Mouth Disease Info: www.FootAndMouthDiseaseInfo.org
- ⁱ USDA APHIS FMD disease factsheet, 2021: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-fmd-general.pdf
- ^j USDA APHIS FMD Response Ready Reference Guide – Etiology and Ecology, Oct 2020: <https://bit.ly/3fXYuiu>
- ^k USDA FMD Response Plan Red Book: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/emergency_management/downloads/fmd_responseplan.pdf
- ^l USDA APHIS Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) resources: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/emergency-management/em-fmd/ct_fmd
- ^m USDA APHIS FAD PReP Materials and References: <https://bit.ly/3EGbync>
- ⁿ American College of Veterinary Pathologists Foot and Mouth Disease Factsheet, 2012: https://www.acvp.org/page/Foot_Mouth_Disease
- ^o Secure Beef Supply Contingency Planning Considerations for Producers during an FMD Outbreak, 2018: <https://securebeef.org/Assets/Secure-Beef-Supply-Contingency-Planning-Producers.pdf>
- ^p Secure Beef Supply Plan: www.securebeef.org
- ^q Secure Milk Supply Plan: www.securemilk.org
- ^r World Organization for Animal Health, Foot-and-mouth disease: <https://bit.ly/3Sb9Xsl>
- ^s USDA FAD Response Ready Reference Guide – Overview of Continuity of Business and the Secure Food Supply Plans, 2016: <https://bit.ly/3g6sLfa>
- ^t Secure Beef Supply Movement Records: <https://securebeef.org/beef-producers/movement-records/>
- ^u Secure Milk Supply Movement Records: <https://securemilksupply.org/milk-producers/movement-records/>