

# FMD ADVISORY

## **What is FMD?**

Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly communicable viral disease of cattle, swine, and other cloven-hooved animals. FMD is characterized by fever and blister-like lesions and erosions on the tongue and lips, in the mouth, on the teats, and between the hooves of affected animals. Many animals recover from FMD infection, but the disease leaves them debilitated. It also causes severe losses in the production of meat and milk. FMD does not affect humans.

## **What Can Be Done to Keep FMD Out of the United States?**

Due to the recent FMD outbreak in Great Britain and other European countries, USDA's Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service are on heightened alert at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry to ensure that passengers, luggage, cargo and mail are checked for prohibited agricultural products or other items that could carry FMD. In addition, Federal and State animal health officials have alerted private veterinarians to ensure increased monitoring of domestic livestock for FMD.

APHIS and most States have an FMD response plan in the event the disease is detected in the United States. However, as important as the federal and state governments' efforts are in precluding as well as controlling the spread of FMD should it occur in the United States, the livestock industry, including the marketing sector, must be equally vigilant and responsive to a possible FMD outbreak in this country.

## **What Can the Markets Do?**

APHIS encourages all livestock market operators and their veterinary personnel to be extra observant of the animals consigned to livestock markets for signs of FMD and to report any unusual animal health symptoms to State or local veterinary officials. The most common symptoms of FMD include blisters around the mouth and resulting slobbering, lameness, and reduced appetite. FMD can be confused with several other, but less harmful diseases thus it always good to error on the side of caution.

When an investigation is conducted, the location is placed under quarantine until laboratory tests confirm whether or not the condition is FMD. In the last year alone, APHIS has investigated approximately 400 potential foreign animal disease situations. None of these tested positive for FMD. This continued vigilance ensures that an incursion of FMD would be identified quickly and hopefully controlled before it spreads widely in the U.S. livestock population.

The quarantine of a market or production facility could admittedly result in serious economic consequences. However, without the market's due diligence in identifying and reporting potential FMD cases, the disease would spread unchecked and potentially cause the further spread of the disease and greater harm to the livestock industry at large. Thus, **we urge LMA member markets to immediately report any suspected case of FMD to their local or state veterinarian.**