

Foreign Animal Disease Outbreaks



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KEYWORDS

- Foreign animal diseases • Veterinarians • Preparedness • Biosecurity
- Secure beef supply plan

KEY POINTS

- Veterinarians play a vital role in recognizing and promptly reporting diseases or syndromes of concern in an effort to minimize the impact of foreign animal diseases (FADs).
- Private practice veterinarians are a tremendous resource for their clients and local community preparing for and responding to an FAD outbreak.
- Numerous resources exist for veterinarians to train themselves about foreign animal diseases, animal health emergencies, and help their clients prepare and develop biosecurity and business continuity plans.
- An FAD outbreak will require a concerted effort by producers, veterinarians, emergency responders, and state and federal officials to successfully control and eradicate the disease.
- Be part of the success; start preparing today.

INTRODUCTION

A foreign animal disease (FAD) incursion affecting beef cattle in the United States is plausible due to global trade trends and increased movement of animals, people, pathogens, and feedstuffs. Areas of geopolitical conflict have also contributed to an increased movement of FADs out of their historical regions. Several important outbreaks have occurred globally in areas once considered free, including foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), lumpy skin disease, and HoBi-like virus.^{1,2} An FAD is defined as “a terrestrial animal disease or pest, or an aquatic animal disease or pest, not known to exist in the U.S. or its territories.”³ The list of FADs (and domestically important diseases) affecting cattle can be found in the *US National List of Reportable*

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Animal Diseases, available at: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animal-health/program-overview/ct_national_list_reportable_animal_diseases.

In response to the increase in FAD outbreaks worldwide, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to develop and update the FAD Preparedness and Response Plan (PRReP). This diverse portfolio includes strategic plans, emergency management guidelines, disease response plans, and the Secure Food Supply Plans for cattle, pigs, and poultry. The FAD PRReP goals of an FAD response are to detect, control, and contain an incursion of an FAD in the United States as quickly as possible, then eradicate the disease using science-based and risk-based measures, as well as strategies that facilitate continuity of business for noninfected animals or noncontaminated animal products.⁴ In addition to planning for a potential FAD incursion, the USDA has also developed guidance for emerging diseases, as described in the *Emerging Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Plan*, July 2017 available at: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/emerging-dis-framework-plan.pdf. These diseases could have a major impact on American livestock production, the livelihood of producers and veterinarians, animal and public health, food safety, food security, export markets, and the economy. Veterinarians play a vital role in recognizing and promptly reporting diseases or syndromes of concern in an effort to minimize the impact.

ROLE OF THE VETERINARIAN IN FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE INVESTIGATIONS

Daily interactions with cattle across a community, state, or region allows veterinarians to see a variety of health challenges, recognize trends or seasonality issues, gather and share knowledge on successful treatment protocols, and educate producers about best practices. This broad exposure also puts veterinarians in a critical role: diagnostician for endemic and possible FADs. It is a tremendous responsibility and there are tools available to help refine clinical sign recognition for FADs and enhance preparedness for veterinarians and their clients. Many are described in this article.

“Early identification and quick response in the FAD investigations are critical steps to ensuring that any further spread is minimized.”⁵ Cattle veterinarians play a crucial role in this process. Whether prompted by a call from a client with concerns that the cattle seem “off” or blatant clinical signs that match the textbook and Web images from veterinary school, it is important to say something when you see something. Veterinarians should not submit laboratory samples or attempt to diagnose a suspected FAD on their own. It just takes a phone call. The steps in an FAD investigation include

- Call the state animal health official (SAHO) and the USDA assistant district director.
 - These individuals will discuss the veterinarian’s observations and gather some history of the operation and the situation of concern.
 - If their suspicions include an FAD, they will then send an FAD diagnostician (FADD) to the operation to investigate further. FADDs are veterinarians employed by a state or the USDA who have had additional training in disease recognition, sample collection, and biosecurity to contain disease.
 - Depending on the disease of concern, the SAHO may recommend meeting the FADD at the operation or follow specific biosecurity measures, which may or may not include seeing additional animals that day (see later discussion on business continuity for veterinary practices).
 - A list of SAHOs is available on the US Animal Health Association Web site, available at: <http://www.usaha.org/federal-and-state-animal-health>.

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