

# US. Remains Free OF BSE And FMD

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. remains free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or what is commonly referred to as mad cow disease.

There have been no cases of either disease in the U.S., due in large part to aggressive prevention measures designed to protect U.S. cattle herds and assure the safety of the beef supply for American consumers. Below is a summary of facts about FMD and BSE, including prevention measures for both:

**Foot-and-Mouth Disease:**

**• Background**

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease that does not affect humans but has devastating effects on animals with cloven hooves, such as cattle, swine, sheep, goats and deer. The U.S. has not had a case of foot-and-mouth disease since 1929, an outbreak that was quickly con-

tained and eradicated.

There are seven types of the FMD virus, all of which have similar symptoms. Immunity to one type does not protect animals from other types. The average incubation period for FMD is between three and eight days, but can be up to two weeks in some cases. The disease is rarely fatal but may kill very young animals. Animals that survive are often debilitated and experience severe loss in milk or meat production.

**• Spread**

Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly contagious virus and can be spread by movement of infected animals, movement of contaminated vehicles, and by contaminated facilities used to hold animals. It also can infect animals through contaminated hay or feedstuffs and if susceptible animals drink from a common water source.

While FMD is not considered

a threat to human health, people who come in contact with the virus can spread it to animals through clothing, footwear or other equipment/materials. The virus can harbor in the human nasal passages for as long as 28 hours. Wind also can spread the virus through the air.

**• Economic Effects**

If FMD were to occur in the U.S., the degree of economic impact would depend on how quickly the disease was identified and effective control measures put in place. If it was controlled quickly and eradicated, as was the case with the last outbreak in the U.S. in 1929, the damage might be small. However, if the disease became widespread, the economic loss could easily be many billions of dollars.

The most serious effects would result from the necessity of destroying animals in order to eradicate the disease. In addition, countries with FMD experi-

ence restricted exports.

**• Prevention**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regularly monitors for any disease among U.S. cattle herds and takes aggressive steps to prevent FMD from spreading to the U.S. whenever there is an outbreak in other countries:

- As part of its ongoing surveillance program, the USDA conducts hundreds of field inquiries each year in an effort to detect animal diseases that might affect livestock.

- When there is an outbreak of FMD in another country, the U.S. temporarily prohibits the importation of animals and animal products from that country into the United States. These restrictions augment those already in place on ruminants and ruminant products to prevent the introduction of BSE into the U.S.

- The government also prohibits its travelers from carrying into the United States any agricultural products, particularly animal products

that could spread FMD. Passengers are required to identify any farm contact to Customs and USDA officials. All baggage is subject to inspection. Violations could result in penalties of up to \$1,000.

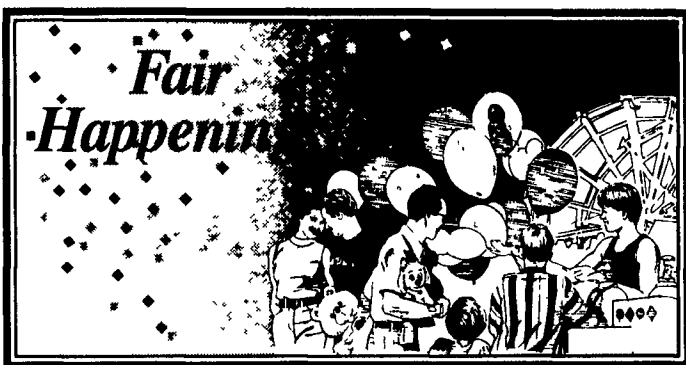
- A team of experts (40 federal, state and University officials) is sent to the European Union or other country with an outbreak to monitor, evaluate and assist in containment efforts.

- There is heightened alert at ports of entry and airports to ensure passengers, luggage and cargo are checked as appropriate. This includes placing additional inspectors and dog teams at airports to check incoming flights and passengers.

- USDA officials also are stationed around the globe to monitor and coordinate with the state agriculture officials.

- USDA recently initiated an aggressive public education campaign that includes additional signage in airports, public service announcements, website, and other tools to inform the public about this important issue and steps they can take to prevent it from entering the United States.

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**Fair Announces Ticket Sale For Grandstand**

It's beginning to look a little like summer with The Great Allentown Fair announcing its grandstand concert lineup for the 149th exposition ending on the Labor Day holiday.

Both the announcement of the shows and the ticket sale date is earlier than usual, according to Bonnie Brosious, fair marketing director and talent buyer. Tickets to all six concerts featuring a mix of pop, rock and country music will go on sale starting Saturday, March 24 at 10 a.m.

Classic rock bands Styx and REO Speedwagon will open the fair on Tuesday, Aug. 28. Pop-rockers Vertical Horizon, SR-71 and Nine Days will perform on Wednesday, Aug. 29. Two back-to-back country nights follow

with Kenny Chesney and Lee Ann Womack on Thursday, Aug. 30 and Brooks & Dunn with special guest Toby Keith on Friday, Aug. 31.

Alternative rock group Blink 182 will play on Saturday, Sept. 1 and pop boy-band 98° rounds out the musical bill on Sunday, Sept. 2. Special guests for the Saturday and Sunday shows will be announced at a later date. The fair will close with J & J Demolition Derby on Labor Day Monday, Sept. 3.

Tickets for the concerts vary in price from \$29 to \$36 and include admission to the fair if purchased in advance. There are reserved track and grandstand seats for all of the shows except the Wednesday and Saturday rock concerts when there is festival-style, general admission on the track and reserved seats in the grandstand. The demoli-

tion derby prices are \$11 general admission and \$6 for children under age 12.

Special hours at the Fair Box Office are from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 24. The box office is located east of the Farmers Market on the Allentown Fairgrounds at 17th and Chew streets. Cash, Visa, and MasterCard are accepted at the box office.

Tickets may also be purchased at Ticketmaster outlets during outlet hours and will be available seven days a week over the phone and on-line. Ticketmaster charge-by-phone numbers are (215) 336-2000 and (570) 693-4100. Ticketmaster on-line is accessed through www.ticketmaster.com or using a link on the "star performers" page of the fair's Website at www.allentownfairpa.org. Ticketmaster sales also start at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

Tickets remain on sale at the fair box office Mondays through Fridays 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information about tickets or the fair, call (610) 433-7541 or visit the fair's Website.

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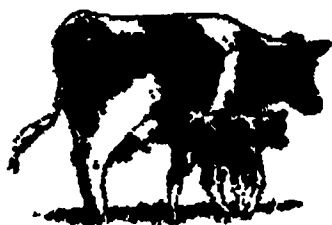
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