

# Foot And Mouth Disease

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restrictions on importation of animals and animal products.

The USDA's Regional Emergency Animal Disease Eradication Organization also has an updated response plan, which integrates state and USDA response to a foreign animal disease, that will likely be activated if FMD is discovered in the U.S.

Both the USDA and the state Agriculture Department have drafted guidance for travelers to FMD countries that, if followed, will minimize the risk of transporting the virus to the U.S.

Overseas travelers are advised to take the following precautions upon their return to the U.S.:

- Avoid contact with animals or areas where animals have been held for at least five days before returning to the U.S.
- Before returning to the U.S., launder or dry clean all clothing, jackets or coats.
- Those who have visited a farm, or come in contact with livestock during their international trip, should shower, shampoo and change into clean clothing. Wash or dry clean clothes — don't risk taking the virus home on contaminated clothing.
- Remove all dirt or organic material from shoes, luggage, personal items, etc. Thoroughly clean the items with disinfectant, such as bleach.

- Don't bring prohibited agricultural products home.
- Avoid contact with livestock or wildlife for at least five days after returning.

FMD, which has not been seen in the U.S. since 1929, is caused by a highly infectious virus that can cause death or disabling blisters and sores in and around the mouth, muzzle, teats, and feet of livestock with cloven or "split" hooves. Cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and deer are highly susceptible, and can exhibit clinical disease signs after an incubation period of only three to eight days. To stop the spread, affected or exposed animals must be slaughtered, then burned or buried. Premises and equipment must be disinfected to prevent the spread of FMD.

FMD could cause devastating economic damage in the U.S. An outbreak would cost millions of dollars to fight, in addition to the thousands of animals that would likely be destroyed. Livestock markets would be closed. Normal flow of animal products would be disrupted. Transportation of animals would be restricted. Exports of beef and pork would be embargoed. Population control might have to be established as a biosecurity measure if there is an outbreak. In the end, no one - producer, consumer or taxpayer - would be unaffected.

For more information on Foot and Mouth Disease, visit the Department of Agriculture Homepage through the PA PowerPort at [www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us) or directly at [www.pda.state.pa.us](http://www.pda.state.pa.us).

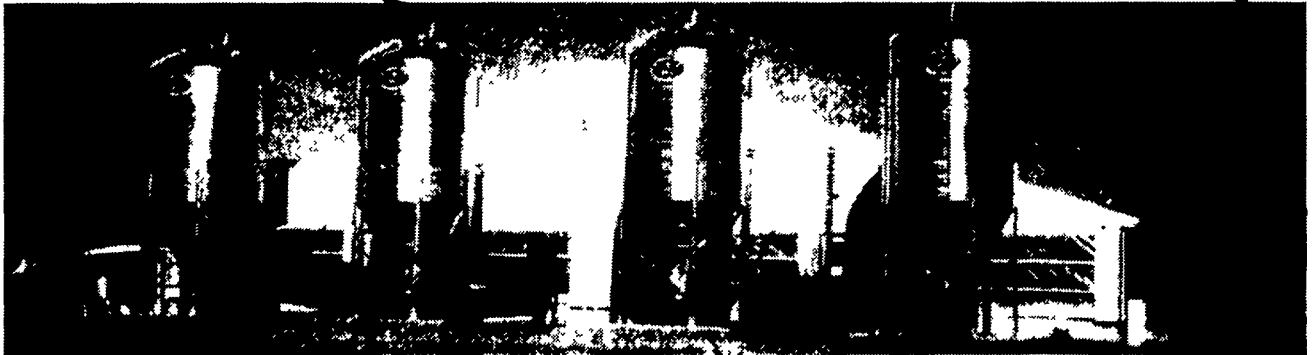
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