

## Preventing the Spread of Viruses in Livestock

### Advice for International Travelers, Visitors, Livestock Producers, and Allied Industries

**For at least five days before you travel to the United States, do not travel near farms, sale barns, zoos, fairs, or other sites where livestock are kept.**

• **Why?** Animals affected by, or even exposed to, Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) can expel the virus as they exhale, and by being in close proximity, you could breathe it in. Although it is not a danger to you, the virus can live in your throat or nasal passages for a time.

**Bathe and shower prior to travel. Wear clean clothes which have not been near livestock, wildlife, or other animals.**

• **Why?** Live, airborne FMD virus can contaminate skin, clothing, and hair. Bathing and wearing fresh clothing prior to travel lessens the risk of carrying the virus.

**Disinfect before you travel to the U.S.! Tuck a bottle of vinegar and a small cloth in your luggage to wipe down glasses, jewelry, watches, belts, hats, cellular phones, hearing aids, camera bags, backpacks, and purses before traveling.**

• **Why?** Vinegar, used full strength, is an effective, but inexpensive, disinfectant. Wipe down all items which may have been exposed to airborne FMD virus.

**Scrape away all mud, debris, or soil from shoes. Disinfect all shoe surfaces with vinegar.**

• **Why?** The FMD virus can live in the soil, organic material, and mud for an extended period of time. Clean shoes reduce risk.

**If possible, wash or dry clean all clothing, including jackets, before traveling to the United States, especially if you live on a ranch! If this is not practical, clean your clothing as soon as possible when you return home. Do not re-wear clothing before they are washed or cleaned!**

• **Why?** Live FMD virus can contaminate clothing. Do not risk exposing United States livestock or wildlife to disease by wearing clothes which have not been washed or cleaned. Remember to clean jackets, gloves, and scarves!

**Do not carry food or other prohibited items to the United States.**

• **Why?** Aside from being illegal, meat, unpasteurized cheese, and unprocessed hides or animal products can harbor live FMD virus.

Upon Arrival in the United States

**Make a Customs declaration if you are carrying food products or if you have visited a farm or ranch on your trip.**

• **Why?** By declaring food products, Customs or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials can properly dispose of them. Failure to declare items can result in excessive fines.

**If you have been on a ranch, visited a zoo, wildlife park, or other site housing animals, make a declaration. It takes only a few moments to have the port officials spray your boots to protect against disease.**

When You Get Home . . .

**Avoid livestock and wildlife at least five days after arriving in the United States.**

- **Why?** It takes time for airborne FMD virus to be cleared from your throat and nasal passages. Do not take chances!

**If you didn't wash or dry clean clothing before traveling to the United States, do it immediately upon returning home.**

- **Why?** Airborne FMD virus could have contaminated your clothing.

**If you live or work on a ranch, wash or dry clean clothing BEFORE you get home!**

- **Why?** Do not risk carrying the virus to your stock!

**Welcoming International Visitors to Your Ranch**

Require these additional precautions:

- Provide arriving travelers with a clean set of clothing which can be worn after showering.
- Wash or dry clean your visitors' clothes immediately.
- Provide shoes, or insist your visitor wear shoes, which have not been worn on a ranch in another country.
- Disinfect visitors' jewelry, eyeglasses, etc., or do not permit these items to enter livestock facilities.
- Never allow meat or animal products from FMD-affected countries on your premises.

**If in doubt, keep them out!**

**The Threat: Foot-and-Mouth Disease**

Since early March 2001, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands have lost more than one million animals due to a Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak. The eradication effort is far from finished, and the number of affected animals climbs each day. While outbreaks in these countries have received the most publicity, it is important to know that FMD has also hit at least 34 other countries worldwide since January, 2000. Keeping FMD out of the United States must become our highest priority!

FMD is especially dangerous and costly because it strikes cloven-hoofed animals, including goats, sheep, deer, cattle, and swine. Within days of exposure to the virus, susceptible animals may develop blisters on the feet, nose, teats, and inside the mouth. Unable to drink, eat, or walk, they lose condition quickly.

To stop the spread of the virus, which can be carried on the wind, exposed and infected animals must be slaughtered and their carcasses burned or buried. A country may spend many years and billions of dollars eradicating FMD. Expenses to fight the disease, lost production and trade opportunities, and a massive livestock slaughter can bankrupt the livestock industry and damage a country's economy.

During an outbreak, allied industries also suffer. Livestock haulers, feed and feedlot companies, livestock shows, slaughter plants, and companies which produce animal care products lose revenue. Costs for goods can also rise, due to a diminished supply of the animal products used in medicines, foods, cosmetics, or clothing. Even an affected country's tourism business can suffer when quarantines and restrictions are placed on affected areas.

**Countries Affected by FMD since January 2000:**

Argentina	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Brazil	Colombia	Egypt
France	Great Britain	Greece	India	Iran	Ireland
Israel	Japan	Kazakhstan	Korea	Kuwait	Kyrgyzstan
Malawi	Malaysia	Mauritania	Mongolia	Namibia	Netherlands
Pakistan	Paraguay	Russia	Saudi Arabia	South Africa	Swaziland
Taipei, China	Taiwan	Tajikistan	Turkey	Uruguay	Zambia
Zimbabwe					

**On Alert in the United States**

All states and the United States Department of Agriculture's Veterinary Services are on heightened alert to investigate possible cases of FMD. Livestock owners, hunters, and veterinarians are urged to report signs of excessive drooling, lameness, or blistering on their animals.

In Nebraska, the USDA's Veterinary Services office can be contacted at **402-434-2300**.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Animal Health, can be reached at **402- 471-2351**.