

Recognize the Symptoms of Foot and Mouth Disease

What is FMD?

Foot-and-mouth disease is the most highly infectious animal disease known. A virus that can infect cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and other cloven-hoofed animals causes it. The disease is characterized by fever and blister-like lesions called vesicles on the tongue, lips, and inside of the mouth; on the teats; and on the tissue around the hooves. FMD is not usually fatal, but it causes a dramatic drop in milk yield in milking animals and a deterioration of in physical condition and growth rate in all infected animals.

How Can I Recognize FMD?

After an incubation period of 2 to 14 days, infected animals demonstrate a variety of clinical signs. These tend to be more severe in dairy cows and intensively reared pigs than in sheep and goats. The signs include:

- 1. Vesicles on the tongue, dental pad, gums, lips, the cleft of the feet, and the teats and udder;**
- 2. A fever of up to 106F, which usually falls in 2 to 3 days; Sticky, foamy, stringy saliva;**
- 3. Reduced feed consumption caused by painful tongue and mouth lesions;**
- 4. Lameness and reluctance to move; and**
- 5. Reduced milk flow in milking animals.**

Some of the symptoms may be confused with other diseases, but don't take a chance. If you see any of these suspicious signs, immediately contact your local Extension Office, veterinarian; or the office of Maryland's State Veterinarian, Maryland Department of Agriculture at (410) 841-5810 or URL: www.mda.state.md.us

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