Focus on Rapid Response

Remember, early disease detection is critical for effective disease response, control, and eradication. Know the signs of foreign animal diseases and report any unusual signs or symptoms immediately to:

- Local veterinarian
- State Veterinarian's Office
  Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
  Division of Animal Industry
- USDA-APHIS Veterinary Services Area Office
  Office Hours: (352) 415-4050

Know the signs of reportable and foreign animal diseases and report any unusual signs or symptoms immediately to:

State Veterinarian's Office

Telephone: (850) 410-0900
Toll Free: 1-877-815-0034
Fax: (850) 410-0916
24-Hour Reporting: 1-800-342-5869
E-mail: rad@FreshFromFlorida.com

Division of Animal Industry

Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

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FOREIGN
ANIMAL DISEASES

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Foreign Animal Disease

Animal health officials define an exotic or foreign animal disease as an important transmissible livestock or poultry disease believed to be absent from the United States and its territories that has a potentially significant health or economic impact. Foreign animal diseases are considered a threat to the United States when they significantly affect human health or animal production and when there is an appreciable cost associated with disease control and eradication efforts. Foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, hog cholera, and highly pathogenic avian influenza can cause high death rates or severe illnesses and production losses.

Florida has a vast and diverse agricultural system that is susceptible to foreign animal diseases. The geographical location of the state, its climate, and numerous ports of entry all contribute to the ease of a foreign animal disease introduction. Illegal importation of psittacine birds, reptiles and amphibians, wildlife migration, and bioterrorism also are potential routes of foreign animal disease introduction.

Economic Effects

The economic impact of a foreign animal disease outbreak, such as foot-and-mouth disease, in the United States has been estimated at $14 billion — roughly 9.5% of U.S. farm income. The aggressive disease control measures enacted by animal health authorities to prevent further spread of a foreign animal disease will affect the movement of animals locally and interstate. Jointly, the cost to eradicate, the loss of export markets and the restricted movement of animals paints a grim picture and underscores the importance of prevention, early detection and rapid response.

Focus on Prevention

Prevention is the best way to limit a farm's exposure to a foreign animal disease.

On the Farm

- Implement an animal disease biosecurity plan.
- Create and implement a visitor policy.
- Restrict visitor access to livestock areas or barns.
- Isolate and quarantine new animals or animals returning from shows, fairs, and events.
- Separate any obviously ill animals.
- Limit animal contact to pets and wildlife which can spread disease.
- Do not feed table scraps, human food products, or garbage to animals.
- Train all farmworkers to recognize signs of animal illness and disease.
- Farmworkers must ensure disease is not spread among animals at work and animals at home.
- Vaccinate against disease regularly.

Overseas Travel

- Avoid farms, sale barns, stockyards, animal laboratories, packing houses, zoos, fairs, and other animal facilities for seven days prior to return to the United States.
- Do not bring back food items, especially meats.
- Before returning to the United States, bathe and shampoo your hair, launder or dry-clean all clothing and jackets, and disinfect shoes and accessories like jewelry.
- After returning to the United States, avoid contact with livestock and wildlife for seven days.

Traveling Overseas with a Pet

- Have pets avoid farms, sale barns, stockyards, zoos, fairs and other animal facilities for seven days prior to return to the United States.
- Bathe your pet before returning.
- Disinfect the animal carrier with a bleach solution before returning.
- Keep pets away from livestock and wildlife for seven days after returning.

Focus on Early Detection

Producers play an important role in early detection because of their daily contact with animals.

Examples of suspicious signs of foreign animal diseases include:

- Sudden, unexplained death loss in the herd or flock.
- Severe illness affecting a high percentage of the animals.
- Abortions in otherwise healthy, well-vaccinated herds.
- Blistering (erosions, ulcers) around an animal's mouth, nose, teats, or hooves.
- Unusual ticks or maggots.
- Staggering, falling, or central nervous system disorders.