



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

ANIMAL HEALTH DIVISION

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Information sheet on foot-and-mouth disease

The status of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Denmark is unchanged: since 1983 no outbreaks of FMD has been reported in Danish livestock.

There has been no import of live cloven-hoofed animals to Denmark from Bulgaria in recent years.

It is important to note that the incubation period of FMD is up to 14 days.

The entire Danish veterinary control and surveillance system is on continuous alert, and all precautions will be maintained until the FMD situation in the Bulgaria is normalized.

The European Commission has prohibited any movement of live cloven-hoofed animals out of the following areas in Bulgaria: Burgas, Kardjali, Haskovo, Yambol, Sliven, Shumen and Varna.

Further, the Danish veterinary authorities play a key role in connection to import of live animals to Denmark. According to EU-legislation the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration shall in advance authorize any import of live animals to Denmark. In case a consignment may constitute a risk to human or animal health, the import will not be allowed. Clearly, any import that constitutes a risk of spreading FMD will not be allowed.

Prevention of Control of Animal diseases

Animal disease surveillance

Obligation to notify suspicion of animal diseases

The Danish Animal Health Act of 2004 is the legislative basis for the notification procedure and defines which animal diseases are notifiable in Denmark. FMD is one of those diseases.

The notifiable animal diseases are divided into two groups, i.e. list 1 and list 2. Suspicion of a disease on list 1 shall immediately be notified to the Veterinary Department, whereas notification of a disease on list 2 is only mandatory after laboratory confirmation of the disease. The Danish list 1 notifiable diseases include all former OIE list A diseases as well as several zoonotic diseases.

In accordance with the Animal Health Act, a farmer is obliged to immediately call a veterinarian if the farmer suspects a notifiable disease. The veterinarian shall immediately notify the Regional Veterinary and Food Control Authority (RVFCA) if the veterinarian suspects a disease on list 1. A veterinary officer from the RVFCA will inspect the farm within 4 hours and inform the Veterinary Department about the suspicion. If the veterinary officer cannot rule out the suspicion of a list 1 disease the farm is placed under official surveillance and test material is collected and dispatched to the Danish Veterinary Institute for diagnostic examination.

Early detection of disease

Effective surveillance for clinical disease is required for early detection of disease. Several elements in the Danish legislation promote the clinical surveillance of farm animals. The Animal Protection Act specifies that a farmer must inspect his animals every day. And a veterinarian may only prescribe animal drugs for administration by the farmer if he visits the farm at no more than 35-day intervals.

The legislation gives the responsibility for clinical surveillance on farms to the farmers and the private veterinarians. A second line of defence is the responsibility of official veterinarians to inspect all animals at shows, live animal markets, slaughter animal markets and export animal markets. Also the ante mortem and post mortem inspection at slaughterhouses is a part of the surveillance system.

A high level of awareness among farmers and private veterinarians is required to ensure notification of even the slightest suspicion of a notifiable disease. Generally, the level of education among Danish farmers is high. Information of disease symptoms and significant disease events in EU countries and other parts of the world are made readily available to the Danish farmers at the website of farmers organizations, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and the National Veterinary Institute and in farmers magazines, in the Danish Veterinary Journal, at farmers conferences and at veterinary conferences.

Livestock identification, registration and traceability

Denmark has a high level of animal identification and registration. The data are recorded in a central database, called the Central Husbandry Register (CHR), which is owned by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Central Husbandry Register contains information on holdings, ID's of animals on the holding for cattle, movement of animals and veterinary information from the holdings.

An important part of the register is related to the movement of animals. If an animal or a herd is placed under official surveillance, movement from the herd will not be possible.

The use of CHR in control of animal diseases

The CHR database is an effective tool for tracing routes of disease spread. Furthermore, the CHR helps to control further spread of diseases, as the competent authority will impose restrictions on holdings and individual cattle in case of suspicions or outbreaks of notifiable diseases. Restrictions will also be imposed in case of failure to comply with the provisions of animal identification and registration. This implies that the farmer is not allowed to move

animals from the holding. Moreover, to secure the production of safe food all abattoirs must consult CHR before slaughtering cattle in order to verify the identity of the animal and to ensure that the animal is not quarantined.

Preventive measures

Trade of animals and the transport itself can easily transmit diseases. This was experienced during the outbreak of Newcastle disease in 2002 and the spread of FMD in Europe in 2001. Denmark has introduced regulations on national movement of poultry, cattle, swine, sheep and goats to promote trade patterns and trade practices with a minimum of disease risk. We also describe other biosecurity measures aimed at preventing disease in peacetime and when disease is threatening.

Assembly centres

Assembly centres are either for slaughter animals (animals are only allowed to leave the market for direct transport to slaughter), export markets (animals are only allowed to leave the market for direct transport out of the country) or live animal markets (animals can be brought to farms). Denmark has 28 assembly centres with a permission to trade cattle, pigs, horses, sheep and goats for domestic breeding and production in farms.

Biosecurity and farm visits

Good hygiene practices are generally important in order to prevent the spread of disease in modern farm animal holdings. Good farm biosecurity means that good hygiene practices are in place on the animal holding.

In order to prevent that disease is spread by visitors in animal holdings, the following hygiene measures must be kept:

- Use boots or other footwear that is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before entering and leaving the premises, or disposable shoe covering that is left on the premises;
- Clothing available in the holding, or protective clothing washed at 60 °C as minimum before next visit, must be worn;
- Hands are thoroughly washed after the visit;
- Equipment used in contact with animals, manure or other similar matter must be cleaned and disinfected before use in another animal holding.

If you have been in contact with an animal holding abroad, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration recommend keeping out of Danish animal holdings until 48 hours after the visit. This is a protective measure against introduction of an infection into Danish animal holdings.

Biosecurity plan

Holdings with more than 500 animal units (e.g. approximately 330 heads of dairy cows and young stock, or approximately 1400 sows and piglets) on the same property must meet the following requirements:

- Conclude a health advisory agreement with a veterinary practitioner.

- Develop a biosecurity plan that outlines how the herd is protected against infectious diseases.
- Purchased breeding stock must be quarantined.
- Housing for piglets and slaughter pigs to be divided into sections.
- Veal calves must be inserted in stable sections where the all-in-all-out principle is applied or alternatively in quarantine sections.
- Large sow herds and dairy herds may have up to three suppliers of animals per rolling 12 months.

The biosecurity plan that is a component of the health advisory agreement must be approved by the veterinary practitioner. When approved, the herd owner must submit the plan for scrutiny to the Regional Veterinary and Food Administration, which if necessary may order changes in the plan.

The rules do not apply to herds of poultry, fish and fur. In practice, the rules will apply to herds of cattle and swine as existing Danish sheep and goat herds at present are smaller than 500 animal units.

7 day – 30 day quarantine rule

For cloven-hoofed animals, a 7-day / 30-day quarantine rule is in place. (a 21-day / 30-day rule apply for trade of sheep and goats between EU member states). The 30 days refer to that the animal must not be moved again before 30 days after introduction to the farm. The 7 days refer to movement restrictions on other animals on the farm after entry of an animal. A general exemption applies to movements directly to slaughter within the quarantine period. Every person who sells or transports poultry must keep a record of buyers or recipients of poultry. These records must be kept for 2 years.

Cleaning and disinfection of animal trucks

After each transport of cattle, pigs, sheep or goats, the truck must be washed and disinfected. The driver must keep a log of the sanitary activities at all times. The veterinary authorities at slaughter plants and animal markets can check these procedures. Further, the police assist the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration in controlling these provisions.

The agricultural industry has a system with compulsory wash and disinfection of animal transport vehicles before entering Danish farms as a part of their internal code of practice.

Outdoor pig farms

A double fence to prevent the public from feeding the pigs (and keep the pigs at the field) must surround outdoor pig farms. The fence must have warning signs saying that it is illegal to throw food across to the pigs.

Alert levels

To assist in proper and speedy implementation of the preventive elements of our contingency plan, three alert levels have been defined.

The above mentioned biosecurity measures are in operation at the alert level “low”, i.e. when there is no particular threat to Denmark from a severe contagious disease outbreak in Europe.

The alert level is raised to “moderate” if there is an outbreak of i.e. foot-and-mouth disease in Southern Europe. The immediate preventive steps at this level include tracing imports of animals and animal products from the outbreak area and targeted information to stakeholders about the outbreak area.

The alert level will be raised to “high” if outbreaks are located closer to the Danish border, i.e. in Northern Europe. As a consequence, a full veterinary risk assessment will be conducted with the purpose of targeting the actions and regulation to prevent the introduction of infection by animals, animal products, trucks or people. National biosecurity preventive measures may include:

- Temporary ban on transport of susceptible species in areas or nationally
- No mixing of animals from several farms on trucks
- Cleaning and disinfection checks on trucks
- Restricting access to farms with susceptible species
- Hygiene rules for access to farms

Contingency Planning

Preparing for the unexpected is pertinent. Almost every year we have seen outbreaks of disease in nearby countries with comparable intensive animal production systems.

During the period 1999-2003 outbreaks of classical swine fever in Germany, Luxemburg and France were related to contact with wild boar. In 2000, classical swine fever outbreaks were discovered and eradicated in the UK. A year later foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks hit the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and France. In 2002, Newcastle disease swept through Danish poultry flocks. In 2003 the Netherlands was severely affected by highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks. In 2007 foot-and-mouth disease again hit the UK. In 2006-2009 blue-tongue severely affected a number of countries in EU.

So despite a history of few disease outbreaks, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has put a great effort in preparing and revising the contingency plans in line with the experiences gained in other European countries and with recent developments of EC directives.

Contingency plans

Denmark has, in accordance with EU legislation; contingency plans for severe contagious animal diseases. The contingency plans are available on the Danish homepage, unfortunately only in Danish.

Disposal

Swill

Feeding of heat-treated swill to pigs became strictly prohibited in 2002 in accordance with Council Directive 2001/89/EC, the classical swine fever directive.

Swill may only be used in approved biogas plants or in other plants approved in accordance

with Regulation 1774/2002 of 3 October 2002 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption.

Garbage from private household has to be incinerated. The organic fraction may be collected separately and used in biogas- or composting plants.

Food waste from international airports and ports is collected separately and incinerated. The feeding of such international swill/food waste to animals has always been prohibited.

To prevent illegal use of food waste as feedstuff, the public control in shops, restaurants etc are focusing on how they are getting their food waste disposed of.

Animal By-Product legislation

To prevent pathogens in the feedstuffs of animal or fish origin rules for collection of fallen stock and rules for processing of waste from the food industry including abattoirs applies.

Council Regulation 1774/2002/EC, the so-called animal by-product regulation have been applied in Denmark and the other EU countries since the 1st of May 2003.

The regulation contains detailed rules regarding the handling, collection, treatment and use or disposal of animal by-products not intended for human consumption. The regulation divides the by-products into 3 categories. The categorization of a specific by-product determines how the by-product may be used or disposed of.

On-line information from Denmark can be obtained on www.fvst.dk



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