

**Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development**

Foot and Mouth Disease

Northern Ireland 26 February 2001

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1. Summary

There is presently no clinical evidence of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Northern Ireland (NI) after extensive tracings of all livestock contacts with Great Britain (GB).

Clinical and laboratory checks on 3 pig farms that supplied pigs to Cheale meats on 15/02/01 have revealed no evidence of infection.

There has been major press coverage and CVO has promoted increased vigilance by the Farming industry. There has been no evidence of FMD in any reported suspects, other than one cow that had extensive ulceration of the lingual mucosa and interdigital ulceration with secondary infection.

Following the confirmation of FMD in GB, NI, on 21 February 2001, placed a ban on all cattle, sheep, goats and pigs and all associated animal products from GB in line with the EU Decision of 21 February 2001.

2. Chronology

Date	Event
21/02/01	<p>Notification that a NI haulier had taken pigs from NI to the Essex slaughterhouse. Batches of pigs from 3 NI herds were possibly in lairage at same time as clinically affected pigs (15/02/01). These herds were visited restricted, clinically inspected and blood samples taken. No signs of FMD in any of these herds.</p> <p>The haulier was interviewed and gave information that he had transported other livestock in Ireland and GB. This information relayed to Ireland and GB.</p> <p>Commission Decision implemented to ensure non-eligible livestock and products could not be exported. A ban on the import from GB of livestock and non-eligible products put in place.</p>
23/02/01	<p>Pig herds as above inspected and remained clinically healthy. Information from GB on confirmation of FMD in the likely Primary Herd.</p> <p>Decision taken to ban the export of livestock to GB and impose a stand still on animal movement except with DARD prior authorisation.</p> <p>All cattle, sheep, pigs and goats movement from GB in previous 4 weeks traced and clinical visits started.</p> <p>One suspect cow (dead) notified by a Private Practitioner. Animal imported from GB on 10 December 2000. Samples taken to rule out FMD and farm restricted.</p> <p>Ban on the movement of all susceptible animals within NI with out prior notification to DARD.</p>
24/02/01	<p>Tracing visits to all animals imported from GB over the last 4 weeks continued. 104 farms visited. Farms which had imported animals within the last 2 weeks were restricted and will be revisited on a daily basis until imported animals have been present in NI for at least 2 weeks.</p>
25/02/01	<p>Tracing visits continue.</p>
26/02/01	<p>Tracing visits continue.</p>

3. Detail of backward traced pig farms

3.1 BT/01/P/01

Total pigs on farm	120 sows, 2 boars, 580 piglets
Other stock on farm	None
Clinical visit 21/01/01	No evidence of FMD, Samples to Pirbright
Clinical visit 22/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 23/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 24/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 25/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Results of Lab tests	Confirmed negative

BT/02/P/01

Total pigs on farm	280 sows, 6 boars, 1800 young stock
Other stock on farm	15 Horses
Clinical visit 21/01/01	No evidence of FMD, Samples to Pirbright
Clinical visit 22/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 23/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 24/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 25/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Results of Lab tests	Confirmed negative

BT/03/P/01

Total pigs on farm	150 sows, 2 boars, 1350 young stock
Other stock on farm	34 ewes, 3 lambs

Clinical visit 21/01/01	No evidence of FMD, Samples to Pirbright
Clinical visit 22/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 23/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 24/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Clinical visit 25/01/01	No evidence of FMD
Results of Lab tests	Confirmed negative

4. Investigation of haulier

The haulier that transported the pigs from the NI farms to the Essex Meat plant has been interviewed and his movements investigated in detail. After unloading the pigs at the Essex slaughterhouse, he drove to Scotland to pick up sheep, which were subsequently imported in to NI for direct slaughter. He did not visit any other NI farms before his lorry was cleaned and disinfected and was subsequently used to transport cattle within Ireland. The Irish authorities have been informed of this connection and have been following it up. MAFF officials are following up the Scottish connection.

5. Detail of suspect cattle herd (S/03/01)

Private veterinary surgeon (PVS) called to a recumbent cow on 20/02/01. Reported to have been chronically ill since importation from GB on 15 December 2000. Animal was treated then and on following day. No response to treatment and cow was euthanised on 23/02/01. PVS reported case as suspect FMD in view of the developing situation in GB. Clinical signs included sloughing of mucosa of mouth and nose and interdigital sloughing. There was also ocular discharge and corneal opacity, scabs on teats and under-running of the coronary band. The most likely diagnosis was Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF). Calf at foot was healthy.

The rest of herd of 101 cattle are clinically healthy. There are 400 sheep on the farm – none are showing signs of FMD.

The farm was restricted on 23/02/01

Samples taken from the suspect cow and dispatched to Pirbright. The carcase of the suspect animal was burnt on farm.

Daily clinical examinations on the rest of the herd have revealed no evidence of FMD to date.

Final results of samples are awaited but the initial ELISA tests are negative.

6. Investigations of animals imported from GB

In view of the developing situation in GB on 23/02/01 a decision was taken to carry out visits to all farms that had imported susceptible livestock since 23/01/01. A ban on the movement of livestock within NI without prior notification to DARD was put in place. Details of GB imports were derived from:

- ANIMO notifications
- Log of importation recorded by Portal inspectors at Larne and Belfast Ports

APHIS and an Import/Export Database completed by DVOs on receipt of notification of imports.

104 such surveillance visits have been carried out. Staff were instructed to give a full clinical inspection to all livestock imported from GB. In the case of animals that had been imported more than 14 days previously a single visit was carried out. Where animals had been imported less than 14 days a daily visit and clinical examination was requested. Restriction notices were served and are only being lifted as clear clinical examinations are carried out and the livestock have been in NI for at least 14 days.

7. Detail of ban on imports of livestock and product from GB

On 21/02/01 the import of cattle, sheep, pigs and goats from GB was banned. Import of products that did not comply with the Commission decision were also banned.

This ban was enforced by DARD Portal inspection staff at Larne and Belfast Ports.

8. Standstill on animal movements

A standstill on animal movements without prior authorisation from DARD was introduced in NI on 23/2/01.

This included a ban on the export of all susceptible species from NI to GB.

All livestock markets, shows and gatherings of animals were suspended on the same day.

9. Conclusion

We believe that NI is currently free of FMD and has in place systems to minimise the risk of introduction of FMD to NI.