

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

Department of Food and Health

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Subject finland is free of foot and mouth disease

Having imported no cloven-hoofed animals from risk areas, Finland remains free of foot and mouth disease. It has not experienced an outbreak of the disease since 1959.

Very few animals at risk have been imported recently. The only importation of cattle this year occurred when animals were brought from Denmark on 4.1.2001 and from Sweden on 16.2. The total number of imported animals was 21. Both countries are free of FMD, Sweden since 1966 and Denmark since 1983. No importation of swine, sheep or goats has taken place from EU-countries to Finland during the last 8 years. No cloven-hoofed animals have been imported from the UK or France since the 1980s.

In addition to the decisions of the European Union, Finland has implemented several national bans and restrictions, including the total ban of swill feeding. The importation of cloven-hoofed animals is forbidden at present. Special precautionary measures are carried out at the farm level.

Passengers coming by air from risk areas are given information during flights about the necessary preventive measures. The information contains instructions for personal disinfection and for the disinfection of clothes and footwear. For passengers travelling with pets, advice is given regarding the washing and disinfection of the pets and their boxes. Similar advice is given to those importing horses from the risk areas.

The footwear of flight passengers is disinfected on arrival, and the passengers are informed that importing food or other products derived from cloven-hoofed animals from infected areas is strictly forbidden. The customs authorities have started to carry out special controls for passengers arriving from risk areas.

These preventive measures have helped maintain Finland free of foot and mouth disease. There is no justification for restricting or banning the export of Finnish products of animal origin. Further information is available from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

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