

Secure Beef Supply Plan – What Beef Producers Need to Know

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Foot and mouth disease (FMD), while harmless to people, causes blisters in animals with cloven hooves, such as cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. It is the most contagious disease of livestock. However, it is not a public health or food safety concern. Normal appearing cattle can shed FMD virus in bodily fluids like saliva, urine, milk and even semen, two to four days before clinical signs appear. The FMD virus is very easily spread to other animals on vehicles, people's clothing or footwear, and equipment that can carry the virus in saliva, manure or dirt. Foot and mouth disease has not affected United States livestock since 1929. However, if FMD were diagnosed today, State and Federal Officials would turn to USDA's Foot and Mouth Disease Response Plan, also known as "The Red Book", to respond to this very contagious livestock virus. The Red Book provides guidance on setting up Control Areas around Infected Premises, which are farms with livestock that test positive for FMD. The size of the FMD Control Area could be as small as a six mile radius from the Infected Premises for one farm, or very large, such as an entire region, if several farms have positive animals. Movement controls will be put in place in the Control Area to limit FMD spread. This will include moving animals between premises and to packing plants. At the beginning of an FMD outbreak, several days to weeks may be needed before the livestock industry and federal and state officials have sufficient knowledge of the extent of the outbreak to have confidence that animals can be safely moved without contributing to disease spread. During this time, movement restrictions will be put in place for the Control Area(s) to limit disease spread by animals, animal products, vehicles, and other equipment. It is the Responsible Regulatory Officials' responsibility during an outbreak to detect, control, and contain FMD in animals as quickly as possible with the ultimate goal of eradication. It is the producer's responsibility during an FMD outbreak to protect their animals from becoming infected, focusing on what they can control on their operation. To facilitate business continuity (movement), producers will need to provide assurances to the Responsible Regulatory Officials that they are not contributing to the spread of disease nor putting their own animals at risk of exposure. Some movements carry more risk than others. Biosecurity will be paramount to limiting disease spread. Additionally, producers should be prepared to manage their cattle operations if they are not allowed to move animals for several days to weeks. Developing such contingency plans will allow time to conduct appropriate surveillance to demonstrate a lack of evidence of disease and more confidence that a movement does not present a significant risk for disease spread. Responsible Regulatory Officials will be making permitting decisions regarding the movements of animals and animal products (semen, embryos) within, into, out of, and through Control Areas based on the unique characteristics of the outbreak, the status of the premises, and the risks involved with the types of movement. The Secure Beef Supply (SBS) Plan provides a continuity of business plan for cattle operations in Control Areas that are affected by movement controls, but not infected with FMD, so they can continue to move cattle. Cattle ranchers, feedlot operators, livestock transporters, and packers rely on cattle movements to provide quality beef products to grocers and consumers. The SBS Plan provides guidance for moving cattle that have no evidence of FMD infection to harvest and to other premises, which could minimize lost income across sectors of the beef industry. The SBS Plan is the result of years of collaboration between the beef industry, universities, States, and the USDA. Participation is voluntary. The SBS Plan, funded by the USDA, also provides resources to help producers protect their herd from FMD exposure. The SBS Plan recommends getting a National Premises Identification Number, referred to as a PremID or PIN, for any operation that houses animals. PINs can be requested from the office of your State Animal Health Official. The PIN includes a

valid 911 address and a set of matching coordinates (the latitude and longitude) reflecting the actual location of the animals on the premises. Having a validated PIN speeds up communication and response during an outbreak. Routine biosecurity is not enough when it comes to protecting cattle from FMD exposure. The SBS Plan includes biosecurity guidance based on how FMD spreads. Producers can work with their herd veterinarian and use the self-assessment checklist, corresponding information manual, and template to develop an operation-specific, written, enhanced biosecurity plan. These resources are all available on the SBS website. The biosecurity guidance includes implementing a LOS, or LOS, to limit movement of FMD virus to areas where animals may be exposed. The Line of Separation is a clearly identified boundary around or within an operation to separate off-farm from on farm movements. To visualize the LOS concept, picture the operation as a castle. Think of the LOS as a moat around the castle and the drawbridge is the access point – controlled by the operation. The operation decides when to lower the drawbridge and let in any vehicle, after it has followed appropriate biosecurity measures, such as being cleaned and disinfected. Another component of the SBS Plan is surveillance – looking for FMD in the herd. If your operation is in a Control Area, surveillance may involve periodic farm inspections by regulatory officials. Unfortunately there are no “cow-side tests” that quickly tell if an animal is infected with FMD. Personnel observing animals daily, looking for clinical signs or changes in production, can supplement inspections and testing. The SBS website includes resources to accomplish this. Abnormal findings must be promptly reported to regulatory officials. In order to move cattle from a Control Area to another operation or to a packing plant, producers will need to request a movement permit. Enhanced biosecurity for the livestock truck, driver, and the entire cattle operation will be needed to prevent FMD exposure. Surveillance during an outbreak will be necessary to ensure only cattle from herds with no evidence of FMD infection are moved to other premises. These components can provide Continuity of Business for producers who choose to participate. It is important to note that the SBS Plan is guidance only. Another strategy for control of an FMD outbreak is vaccination. FMD vaccination may reduce clinical disease, increase resistance to infection, and may slow the spread of the outbreak. However, use of FMD vaccination has its challenges as there are multiple strains of FMD, with only limited cross-protection, vaccine quantities may be limited, and use of vaccination would result in trade restrictions to US exports. As the size of an FMD outbreak shifts from a small, focal outbreak to widespread or national outbreak, the response shifts to include the use of vaccination. The decision to use vaccination in an FMD outbreak is complex, and this decision will be made by Federal and State Officials based on the unique characteristics of the outbreak.

For more information and resources on the Secure Beef Supply Plan, please visit www.securebeef.org.