

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Foot and Mouth Disease in Hungary

7 March 2025

Disease Report

On 7 March 2025, Hungary reported Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH ([WOAH, 2025](#))). The outbreak is in a dairy cattle herd (of 1,400 animals) in Kisbajcs in the north of the country and represents the first report of FMD in Hungary since 1973. Another FMD outbreak was reported in water buffalo in Germany earlier this year ([FMD in Germany](#)). The Hungarian National Food Chain Safety Office (Nébih) report that 'classic' FMD clinical signs were observed on the premises on 3 March 2025 and confirmatory testing was carried out on 6 March, with the serotype currently pending. The source is not currently known, though epidemiological investigations are underway.

Culling at the premises is ongoing and restrictions are in place, with a 3km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone established, which also comprise territory in neighbouring Slovakia. Additionally, [movement restrictions have been applied](#) (including internationally), hunting is prohibited within the restriction zones, with blood samples from hunted animals in the wider restricted county of Győr to be tested for FMD. Gatherings of susceptible animals in Győr are currently banned until 17 March and tourist attractions holding susceptible animals (e.g. zoos) are closed until further notice.

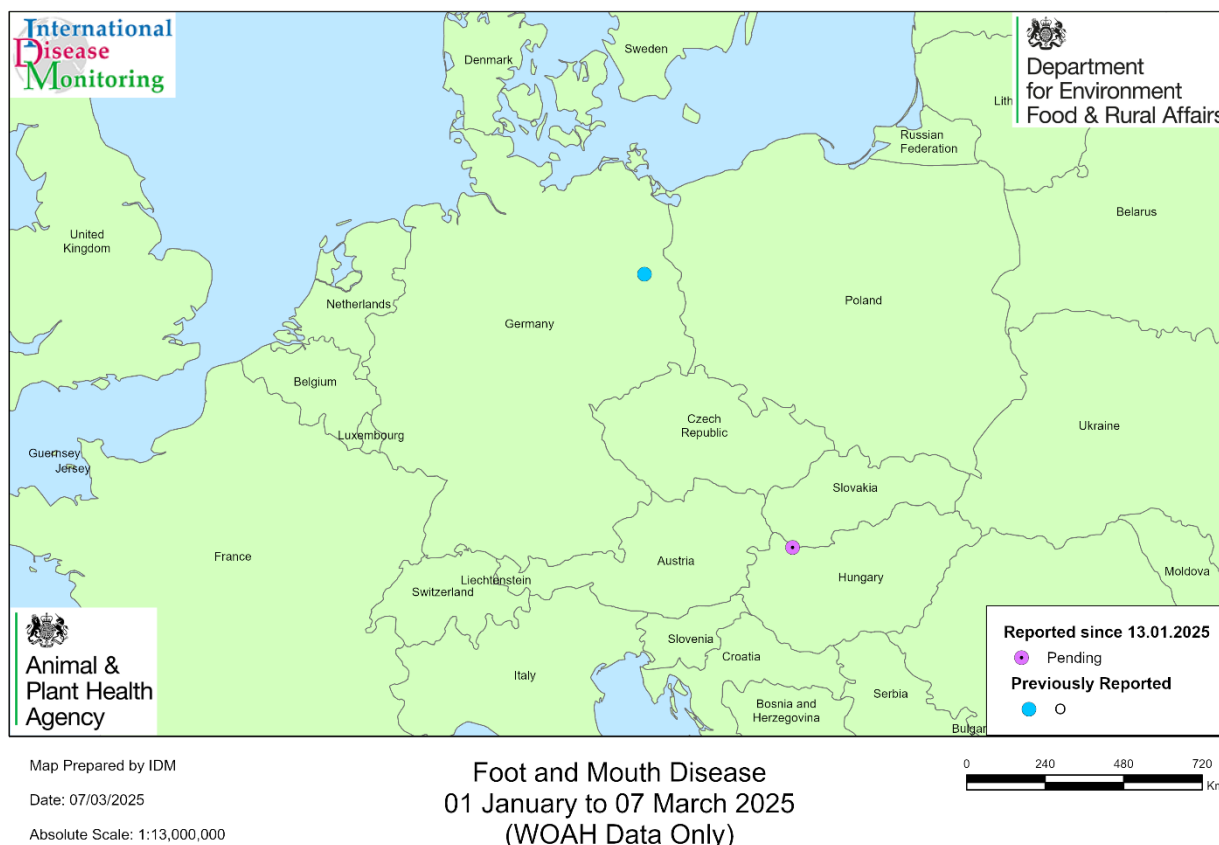


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the outbreak of FMD in Hungary, close to the Slovakian border and a previously reported case in Germany.

Situation Assessment

Foot and Mouth disease is a viral infection of cloven-hoofed animals and can cause severe clinical outcomes. It is the most economically impactful infection of livestock and any outbreak in livestock or case in wildlife can result in widescale trade restrictions of live animals, germinal products and products of animal origin. This is the first outbreak of FMD in Hungary in over 50 years and the second case recorded in the EU this year. The outbreak in [Germany](#), detected in January 2025, was the first case recorded in the EU since 2011 (in Bulgaria).

While there is currently no evidence of further spread to other animals, epidemiological analysis is ongoing, and precautionary measures are being taken where appropriate.

Neighbouring and other European countries remain on high alert for the disease, particularly Slovakia as the current outbreak in Hungary is within 2km of the Slovakian border.

WOAH Members' official FMD status map

Last update March 2025

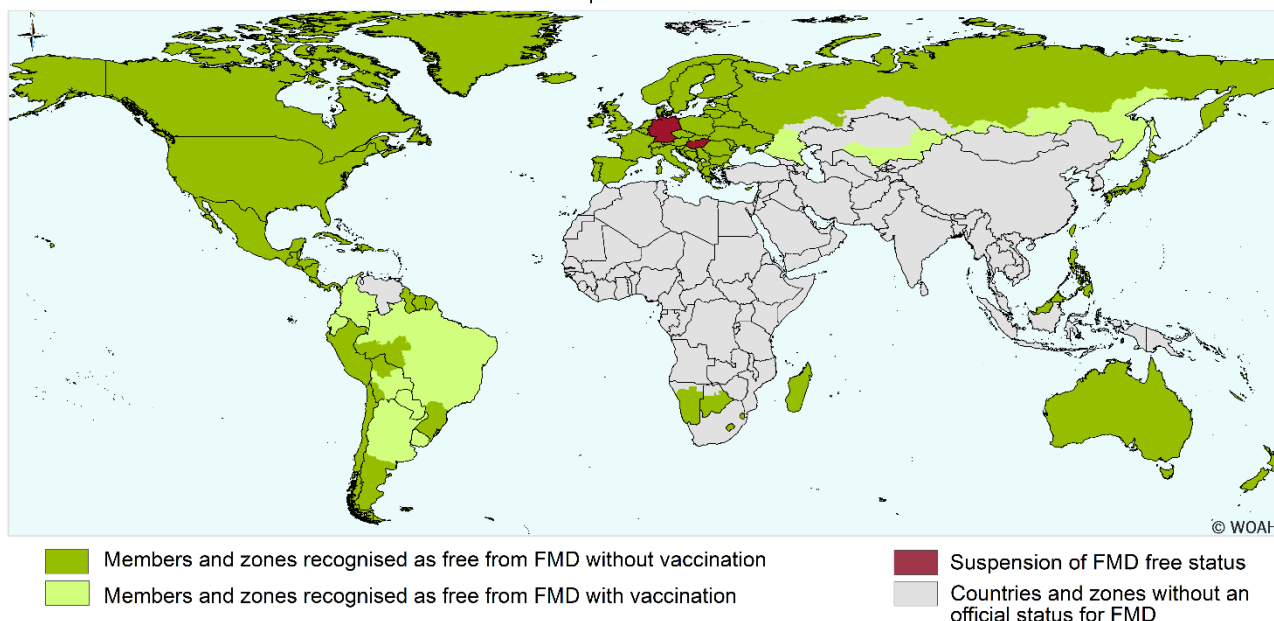


Figure 2 [WOAH Members official FMD status map](#) showing suspension of FMD free status for Hungary and Germany

At the time of writing, there are no reports that this outbreak has an unusual clinical presentation in susceptible species, although we await further information from the Hungarian authorities.

Impacts for Great Britain

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease of cattle, sheep, pigs and other cloven-hoofed animals. It causes very significant economic losses, due to production losses in the affected animals and due to the loss of access to foreign markets for animals, meat and milk for affected countries. FMD does not infect humans and does not pose a food safety risk. While death rates in susceptible species are typically low, the disease can make animals ill with fever, decreased appetite, excessive drooling, blisters, decreased production, and other symptoms.

The virus spreads easily through contact and airborne transmission and can quickly infect entire herds. People can facilitate the spread of the virus through fomites via farming equipment, bedding, shoes, clothing and vehicle tyres that have come into contact with the virus.

There have been no imports of live FMD susceptible animals (including sheep, goats, cattle and pigs) from Hungary in the last 30 days (covering 2 incubation periods, as per the standard tracing approach). There have also been no imports of live FMD susceptible animals from Slovakia in the last 30 days. From 7 March 2025, the import of all live ungulates and FMD-susceptible species from Hungary has been temporarily suspended

and investigations are ongoing regarding the restriction of imports of live FMD susceptible animals from Slovakia.

Illegal trade in live animals of FMD susceptible species from any affected areas to Great Britain is less likely due to logistics, but it cannot entirely be ruled out. As the situation is emerging, there is additional uncertainty regarding how far disease has spread before detection.

Germinal products, products of animal origin (POAO) and animal by-products (ABP) from susceptible species from Hungary are considered a risk for FMD transmission. Any consignments imported from Hungary since 7 February 2025 are being traced. Further consignments are restricted from 7 March 2025 unless processed with a treatment that sufficiently mitigates FMDV (applicable to POAO and ABP only, all germinal products are restricted).

Work is ongoing to assess the risk in germinal products and POAO from Slovakia considering the proximity to the outbreak in Hungary and the Restriction Zones crossing the border.

Following the spread of African swine fever through the region, personal imports of pork or pork products legally must be under 2kg and commercially packaged and stamped, since September 2024. Similarly, following outbreaks of peste des petits ruminant (PPR) in the EU, meat and milk produced by sheep and goats from Hungary must be commercially packaged and stamped since 31 January 2024. Further restrictions of personal imports of commodities from susceptible animals will be suspended from Hungary in due course, subject to the exemptions for infant milk, medical foods and certain composite products as set out in Annex III of [Regulation 2019/2122](#). Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules.

Feed and bedding (hay and straw) represent a risk of fomite transmission. Investigations are ongoing regarding potential imports of hay and straw since 7 February. From 7 March, the import of hay and straw that has not been processed with a treatment that mitigates FMD has been restricted.

Illegal trade of POAO is difficult to quantify but given the recent jumps in FMD and those previously observed in African Swine Fever, along with movements of workers, tourists and at present, refugees, vigilance should be heightened at present.

Vehicles, farming equipment and people represent a risk of fomite transmission from regions with high levels of infection, possibly on vehicles or people who have visited livestock in the region. Therefore, maintaining biosecurity for returning vehicles, equipment, and workers visiting livestock premises is paramount.

Conclusion

The detection of FMD virus in a second European country in short timeframe, where there is no vaccination coverage, is of great concern. The events highlight how this virus can make significant and unexpected jumps, often through trade and movements of people, animals and animal products, and there is a need for continued vigilance. It is currently unclear how disease translocated to Hungary, and understanding how many premises have been affected or whether virus has infected local wildlife such as wild boar or deer is of highest priority.

We therefore consider the risk of incursion of FMD to the UK is maintained at **medium** (event occurs often) during this period of uncertainty.

The risk from illegal imports is difficult to quantify but travellers are reminded that when returning from Hungary, Germany, and other third country areas where ASF or FMD are present, who bring meat or dairy products into the UK can face prosecution and a large fine.

We will continue to monitor the situation and remind livestock keepers of the importance of maintaining strict on-farm biosecurity, compliance with the swill feeding ban, and the reporting of all suspicions of notifiable disease promptly.

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