

IMPORTANT FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MAD COW DISEASE AND FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

Two animal diseases in Europe are making headlines around the globe. One is called mad cow disease (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE), and the other is called foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). Here's what you should know about both:

- 1) The two diseases are NOT related.
- 2) Neither disease exists in Canada.
- 3) The livestock industry and the Canadian government have taken strict measures to keep both diseases out of this country.

Mad Cow Disease (BSE)

- This disease affects beef cattle, not hogs. In infected beef animals, it is found in the central nervous system tissue like brain and spinal cord and in retina (eye) tissue.
- nvCJD, new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, is in the same family of diseases as BSE. This human disease is likely developed as a result of people consuming products contaminated with central nervous system tissue from cattle infected with BSE. There is no evidence of nvCJD in Canada.
- Canada is free of BSE and has strict controls to maintain this status. There has only been one occurrence of BSE in Canada. In December 1993 a cow in Alberta was diagnosed with the disease and subsequently destroyed. The animal had been imported from the United Kingdom. This information was widely reported in the media.
- Canada has suspended imports of live ruminant animals, beef and beef products from any country that is not certified as free of BSE.
- For more information about BSE, visit Health Canada at www.hc-sc.gc.ca and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at <http://inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/bsefaq.shtml>

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

- Foot-and-mouth disease affects cloven-hoofed animals such as pigs, cattle, sheep and lambs. The disease causes general malaise and blisters to form in the mouth or on the feet; however, is rarely fatal to the animals. Canada has not had a case of foot-in-mouth disease in 50 years.
- Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) does not typically affect humans. The most serious impact of FMD is that countries that have it are not allowed to export live animals or fresh or frozen meat products, resulting in major economic damage.
- Canada has temporarily banned imports of all animals and animal products from the entire European Union and Argentina due to concerns about foot-and-mouth disease there.
- To protect Canadian livestock, it is very important that travelers returning from countries with foot-and-mouth disease follow customs regulations, which include notification of farm visits while abroad and not bringing prohibited agricultural products back into Canada.
- For more information about FMD disease, visit Health Canada at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/osh/fam_e.html and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at http://inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/inf_e.shtml

*** Attention ***

Recently there have been numerous media reports on food safety issues pertaining to pork.

Canada Pork has prepared briefs to assist in conveying the facts to the public.

These resources have been developed with information from Health Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and animal health experts.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mary Ann Binnie, Manager, Canada Pork at binnie@cpc-ccp.ca or your provincial pork office.

IMPORTANT FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

What is foot-and-mouth disease?

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease that does not typically affect humans. Rather, it affects animals with cloven hooves such as pigs, cattle, sheep, goats and deer. Canada has not had a case of FMD since 1952, and that occurrence was contained and eradicated quickly.

If foot-and-mouth disease rarely kills animals, and if people can't contract the virus, why is there so much concern about it?

Foot-and-mouth disease is a very contagious virus among animals. If the disease grew to be widespread, the economic impact could be severe. Countries with foot-and-mouth disease are not allowed to export live animals or fresh or frozen meat products. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency regularly monitors for any disease among domestic animals and is taking aggressive steps, working closely with the Canadian hog industry, to prevent foot-and-mouth disease from spreading to Canada.

Can people contract foot-and-mouth disease?

Foot-and-mouth disease typically does not affect humans. People can, however, spread the virus to animals because it can persist on contaminated clothing, footwear, and other materials for several weeks, and can harbour in human nasal passages for as long as 28 hours.

Is the meat from affected animals also contaminated?

Uncooked meat from contaminated animals can carry the virus. However, since the virus does not typically affect humans and would be destroyed when the products are cooked, the primary risk of raw meat is the transmission of the virus to susceptible animals.

Is foot-and-mouth disease the same as mad cow disease, also known as BSE?

No. The two diseases are not related.

For information about FMD, visit

Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/osh/fam_e.html

Canadian Food Inspection Agency http://inspection.gc.ca/english/animal/heasan/disemala/inf_e.shtml