Secure Beef Supply Plan – What Producers Need to Know

1,000-word count article

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Intro paragraphs/attention grabber options (pick one):

1. U.S. beef exports were over $10 billion in 2023. Exports add about $425 of value per fed steer or heifer (including meat cuts and offal), which is nearly 20% of the value for every fed carcass. One case of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) found in the U.S. would shut our export market down and cut profits for all cattle producers.
2. Swine producers are nervously watching the outbreaks of African Swine Fever (ASF) that are happening around the world. ASF can kill pigs. A case in the U.S. would stop exports of pork products and stop movement of pigs throughout the U.S. This disease could also impact cattle movement. Did you know there is a disease just as harmful that can impact cattle and swine? It is called foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).
3. Labor shortages are a challenge in every industry. The thought of adding more biosecurity steps or doing preparedness planning can be overwhelming. However, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Investing time now in employee and biosecurity training could mean less time managing sick cattle. This could improve labor use and overall business productivity. It will also prepare you to apply enhanced biosecurity if the highly contagious foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) enters the U.S.
4. Some beef packers are requiring producers to have an enhanced biosecurity plan that meets the criteria in the Secure Beef Supply (SBS) Plan in case foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) were found in the U.S. The goal is to ensure a continuous supply of safe and wholesome beef is available for consumers. FMD is NOT a food safety risk or public health concern. Meat is safe to eat. Animals can get very sick from FMD so ensuring producers are taking needed steps to protect their cattle is the shared goal of SBS and packers.

Luckily, the U.S. has not had a case of FMD since 1929. It can be found in over two-thirds of the countries of the world! With global travel and trade, there is a risk of FMD introduction to the U.S. An FMD outbreak could cost the agriculture industry $15 to $100 billion U.S. dollars. The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) was an active partner alongside producers, veterinarians, state and federal government officials, and university experts to develop the Secure Beef Supply (SBS) Plan for Continuity of Business to help producers protect their herds from FMD. Recently, the USDA funded NCBA to develop more outreach materials and increase FMD awareness of producers, transporters, and other stakeholders.

# What Does FMD Look Like?

Foot-and-mouth disease (sometimes called “hoof” and mouth disease) causes blisters on the feet and in the mouth of two-toed (cloven-hooved) animals like cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, and some wildlife like elk, deer, and feral swine. FMD is a very contagious animal disease. It is NOT the same as hand, foot, and mouth disease in people. It does NOT affect people or food safety. Meat and milk are safe to eat and drink.

Cattle with FMD show signs of lameness, drooling, and do not want to move or eat because of the painful foot and mouth sores. Signs may not show up for 4 or more days after they are exposed. Adult cattle do not die from FMD. They lose weight and produce less milk for nursing calves. Young calves with FMD are much more likely to die, often due to heart problems. There is no treatment for FMD.

# Preventing FMD Spread

One way to control the spread of FMD is to stop movement of cloven-hooved animals and germplasm (semen, embryos, oocytes). At the beginning of an FMD outbreak, the USDA will recommend at least a 72-hour national movement standstill for cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, deer, elk, bison, and their germplasm. How would a standstill affect your business? What if you have cattle on the road or need to move them in the next few days? Having a “what if” or contingency plan can help lessen the impact on animals, cattle producers, and transporters.

Movement controls will continue after 72 hours in the areas around infected herds, maybe even an entire state or region. Restarting movement will require a special permit issued by State Officials. The permit will be based on the risk of movement. The SBS Plan has guidance for producers who have cattle with no evidence of FMD infection to meet movement permit criteria, such as those listed here: https://www.securebeef.org/beef-producers/permit-guidance/

# Secure Beef Supply (SBS) Plan

The SBS Plan was written with input from industry, state and federal officials, and university partners. The plan supports FMD control for infected herds and business continuity for uninfected herds. Officials recognize the need to get rid of FMD without destroying the livestock industry; a tough balancing act. The SBS Plan provides resources to help producers voluntarily prepare BEFORE an FMD outbreak. Following the guidance will help producers with cattle that have no evidence of infection, to:

* Limit exposure of their animals to FMD through enhanced biosecurity,
* Move animals to processing or other premises under a movement permit issued by State Officials, and
* Maintain business continuity for themselves and the beef industry, including producers, transporters, packers, and processors during an FMD outbreak.

Some steps producers can take today are:

* Having a National Premises Identification Number (PIN) issued by the office of the State Animal Health Official (SAHO): <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/traceability/state-pin>.
* Work with your herd veterinarian to write an operation-specific, enhanced biosecurity plan.
  + Resources are available on the SBS website such as Biosecurity Checklists, Information Manuals for Enhanced Biosecurity for FMD Prevention, and an enhanced biosecurity plan template at: <https://www.securebeef.org/beef-producers/biosecurity/>
* Keep movement records of animals, people, and equipment onto and off your operation. Movement logs are available at: <https://www.securebeef.org/beef-producers/movement-records/>
* Develop contingency plans for their operation in the case of limited animal movement.

# Disease Monitoring

To limit disease spread during an FMD outbreak, animals must be looked at often so that FMD in the herd is seen quickly. Animal caretakers should be trained on the signs of FMD in cattle. Finding disease early by knowing what is normal and abnormal for a herd is critical. The “See Something Say Something” sign has key things to look for and is available at: <http://securebeef.org/Assets/SBS-AOS_See-Something-Sign.pdf>.

Producers should have or establish a relationship with a USDA Category II Accredited Veterinarian. Many livestock veterinarians have this accreditation. These veterinarians may be needed for disease monitoring and sample collection during an FMD outbreak. To find an accredited veterinarian, use the USDA Accredited Veterinarian locator: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/nvap/ct_locate_av>

Producers should report suspicious signs of disease to their herd veterinarian or officials. There are resources to help producers see FMD signs in their herd, keep records, and report signs of disease on the SBS website under Disease Monitoring: <https://www.securebeef.org/beef-producers/disease-monitoring/>.

# FMD Vaccination

Vaccination of animals against FMD is one tool that may be used during an outbreak. Many factors affect the use of FMD vaccine and are explained in this 8-minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKf-aMgb-y0>

More resources are available at [www.aphis.usda.gov/fadprep](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/fadprep) .

# Next Steps

Explore resources to help you protect your animals and business at [securebeef.org](https://www.securebeef.org/). Work with your herd veterinarian to build an enhanced biosecurity plan. Contact the office of your State Veterinarian to learn more about the SBS Plan in your state.

# Citation

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