

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

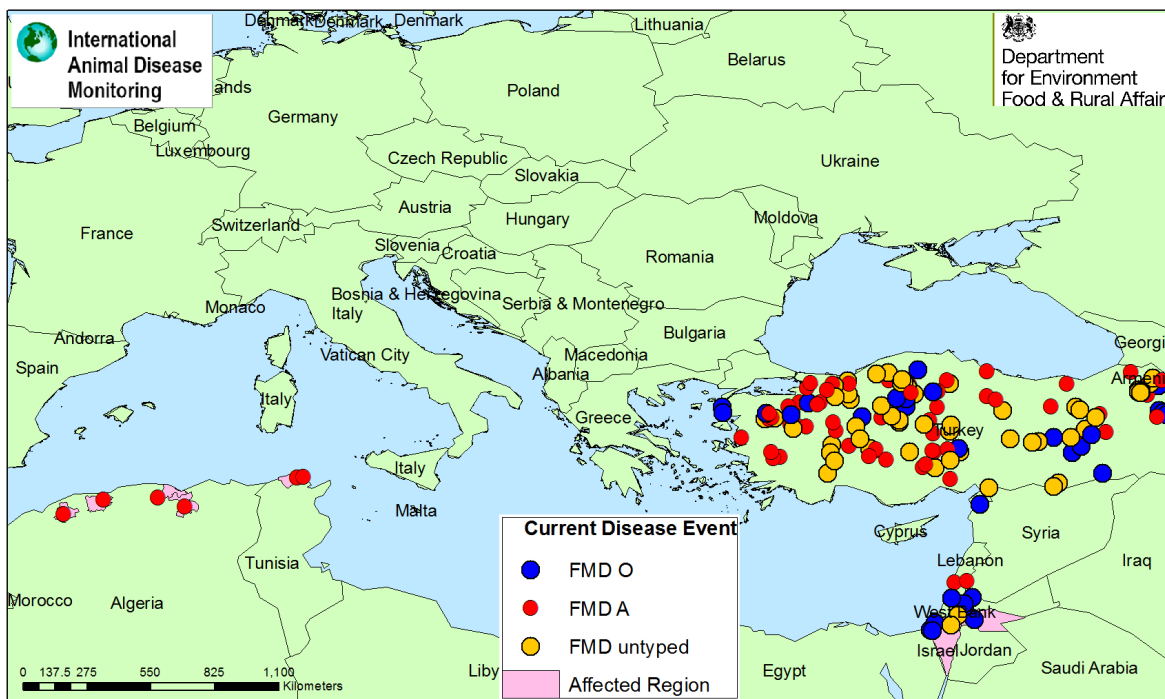
Foot and Mouth Disease in the Middle East and North Africa

19th June 2017

Ref: VITT/1200 FMD in Mid East and N Africa

Disease report

This year, the Algerian Authorities have reported three further outbreaks of FMD serotype A in cattle on farms in Douar Chouaouet (initially reported as serotype SAT1), Medea and Bordj Bou Arreridj. Tunisia has reported 2 outbreaks of FMD A in Bizerte region. All outbreaks occurred in cattle in northern regions. The viruses from Algeria have been sequenced at the World Reference Laboratory (The Pirbright Institute) and were closely related to other A Africa G-IV lineage viruses, including strains collected in Nigeria in 2015 from West Africa. Disease control measures were put in place, including movement controls and vaccination. The source of disease, according to the OIE reports, was illegal movement of animals.



Map prepared by IDM



Recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks: North Africa & Middle East during 2017

Actual Scale 1:25,000,000

Date prepared 19/06/2017

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Animal Health & Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Veterinary & Science Policy Advice Team - International Disease Monitoring**

Israel and Palestine have reported FMD O and A; the O strains are related to similar viruses found in Egypt and Sudan, such as FMD O EA-3. Turkey had reported O, A and Asia-1 in the last two years and recently, O and A continue to be reported, but these are most likely related to incursions from Asia, as the A Asia G-VII or Iran-05 lineages and O ME-SA PanAsia-2 virus topotypes.

Situation Assessment

Over the last few years Tunisia has been undertaking vaccination campaigns, with no outbreaks being reported. Therefore it can be postulated that the infected animals were the result of illegal movements into the country. The serotype identified in Tunisia was the same type that was reported in Algeria. This serotype had previously only been found in West Africa and it is likely that live animal movements in the region are the cause of spread. The outbreaks in Israel and Palestine are typical of these sporadic incursions from North Africa. Vaccine matching for these new incursions should be done to make sure the correct ones are being used.

There is no legal trade from these affected regions to the EU in live animals or untreated (fresh or frozen) products of animal origin from livestock species susceptible to FMD. Illegal trade of untreated products of animal origin from North Africa into Southern Europe or beyond is difficult to quantify but given the proximity to Europe and close connections to North Africa and the Middle East with possible movement of people, vigilance along all the southern European countries should be heightened. Illegal trade in live animals of FMD susceptible species from the region into the EU is less likely due to the logistics, but it cannot entirely be ruled out. Fomite transmission from regions with high levels of infection may be possible on trucks or people who have visited livestock in the region and therefore maintaining biosecurity for returning vehicles and workers visiting livestock premises is paramount. The EU has reminded Member States about the risk posed by livestock transport in general, such as that used for equidae.

Conclusion

There is a complex picture of viral incursion around the borders of the EU. This simply highlights how this virus can still make significant and unexpected jumps, often through trade, or through illegal movements, and therefore there is a need for continued vigilance. We therefore consider there is an overall low risk of introduction of disease from any affected region in the world and that the Middle East and North Africa currently merit enhanced support and vigilance.

The risk from illegal imports is difficult to quantify but would be valid for any currently affected region in the world, including North Africa and the Middle East. Political instability leads to an increase in population movement and this is currently occurring across the whole region.

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

Authors

Sam Wright

Jonathan Smith

Dr Helen Roberts

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

iadm@apha.gsi.gov.uk