

Updated Outbreak Assessment #5

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Hungary and Slovakia

18 July 2025

Disease Report

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 5 June, there have continued to be no further outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) reported in Hungary or Slovakia. The last reported outbreak was on 17 April, in Hungary.

All affected farms have been depopulated, with preliminary cleansing and disinfection finished, while final cleansing and disinfection is ongoing. The Further Restricted Zones (FRZs) have been lifted as of 5 June. Surveillance in the countries, including laboratory testing, continues.

Whole Genome Sequencing data has now been [analysed](#) by the EU reference laboratory (EURL), highlighting the presence of a single putative common ancestor providing evidence for a single introduction of the virus.

The initial source and risk pathway for incursion remains unresolved, though epidemiological investigations continue, and human factors (such as visits, construction and farm workers or milk tank collections) have been implicated in the further spread of FMDV between the affected farms. While wind-borne transmission has also been suggested as a mechanism of spread, despite the lack of reports of infection in farms other than large commercial dairy farms.

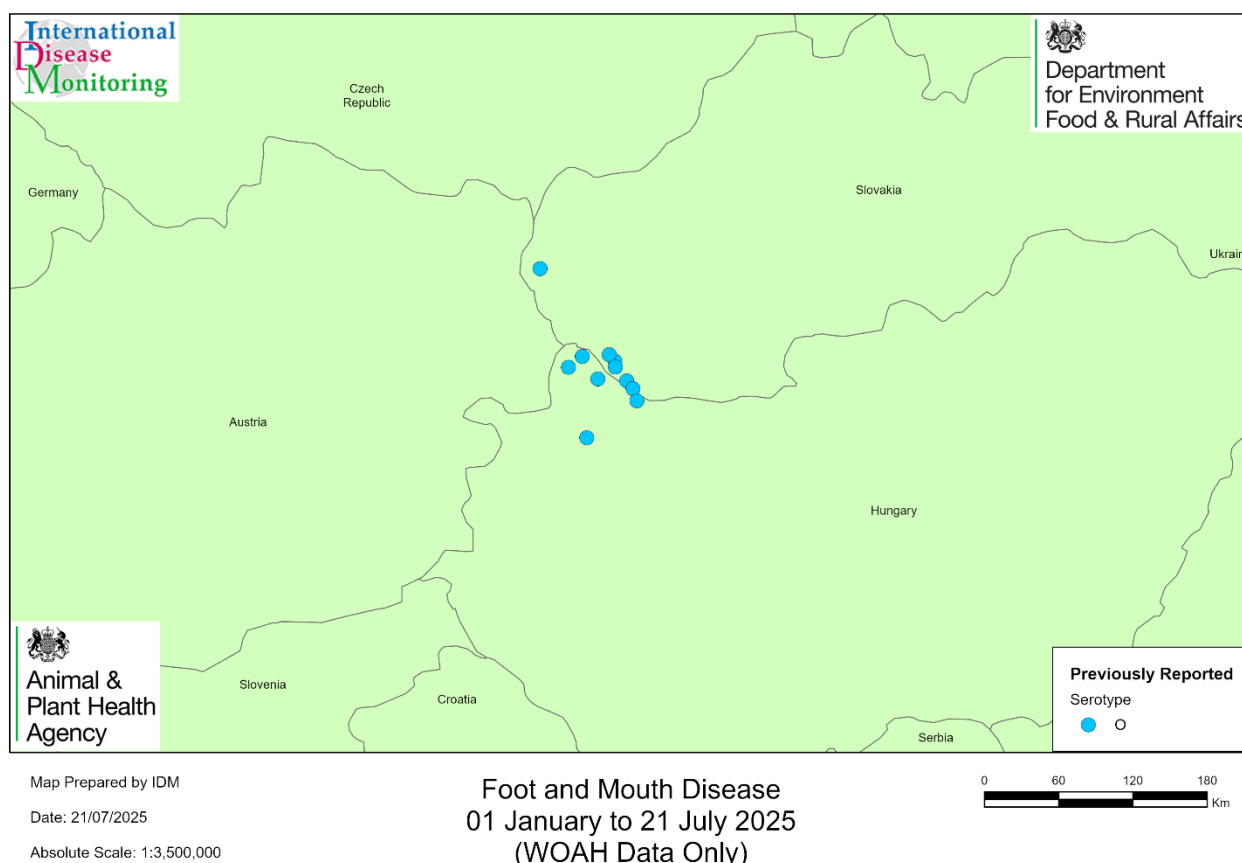


Figure 1: Map showing the locations of the outbreaks of FMD in Hungary and Slovakia, close to the Hungarian and Slovakian borders.

Situation Assessment

FMD is a viral infection of cloven-hoofed animals that 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.

Following sequencing, [the EURL](#) confirmed serotype-O (O/ME-SA/PanAsia2/PUN-16 [aka ANT-10] lineage) in Hungary and Slovakia, with identical VP1 sequences. This sequence is closely related to viruses from Pakistan in 2017 and 2018 and to a virus collected in Türkiye in 2024, although the exact origin and incursion route remains unknown. Whole genome sequencing has been used to construct the transmission pathways between the affected farms in Hungary and Slovakia.

Hungary

Hungary has reported a total of 5 outbreaks of FMD in commercial dairy cattle since the first outbreak on 7 March 2025. The last of these was on 17 April and was considered a contact holding to earlier primary outbreaks in Hungary. Having tested negative on the 11

March and subsequently 23 March, 2 cattle tested positive on 17 April. [The Protection and Surveillance Zones around this outbreak were lifted on 2 June, with the FRZ lifted on 5 June.](#)

Hungary has been undertaking a large campaign to engage with the press and the public regarding FMD. As of 5 June, there had been 6,533 communications released, spread between radio and television, newspapers, and online articles.

As of 17 July, there have been 4,135 sampling visits to livestock premises for FMD across the country, and 7,830 wild game tested ([Hungary's National Food Chain Safety Office](#)). Outside of the outbreak premises, all results have been reported as negative for FMD.

Slovakia

[Slovakia](#) reported 6 outbreaks of FMD in commercial dairy cattle, with the last outbreak confirmed on 4 April. The last Surveillance Zone was lifted on 5 June. As of 16 June, 2,982 holdings have been tested (50,431 samples) and 4,108 samples from wild animals have been tested from across the country. All additional tests have been negative for FMD. Final cleansing and disinfection of the affected farms continues and is expected to be complete by 31 August ([seredonline.sk](#)).

From 10 July, Slovakia introduced the following measures to help control the risk of FMD in the country: the control of persons and vehicles onto farms, hygiene measures for persons, vehicles, and materials entering farms, enhanced biosecurity for all establishments that display animals to the public (including zoos), and checking the health status of animals to be moved before they leave the farm.

These measures are in place until further notice ([Emergency Measure - Foot-and-Mouth Disease \(SLAK\) | ŠVPS SR](#)).

Impacts for Great Britain

While the incursions of FMD into Europe earlier in the year were undoubtedly concerning, there have been no further reports since April, suggesting that the situation in Hungary and Slovakia is under control. Both countries have undertaken surveillance programmes involving domestic livestock and susceptible wildlife species and have had no further outbreaks, despite protection and surveillance zones being lifted.

As the situation was emerging, there was additional uncertainty regarding how far disease has spread before detection, however the sequencing results do suggest that the index case was detected as the first outbreak and although there was some cross border transmission, the close proximity of the outbreaks in both Hungary and Slovakia and the country wide surveillance carried out does suggest that the spread was contained.

Restrictions remain in place on commercial imports of live animals, germplasm, fresh meat, meat products, milk and milk products, animal-by-products, and hay and straw from the entire territories of Hungary and Slovakia. This is under review. Additionally, from [12](#)

[April 2025](#), it has been illegal for travellers to bring cattle, sheep, goat, and pig meat, as well as dairy products, from EU countries into Great Britain for personal use (personal imports) with very [limited exemptions](#). This is to cover the uncertainty introduced by the reports of potential aerosol transmission taking place early in the outbreaks and the immediate slaughter of non-commercial animals surrounding the infected establishments. Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules.

Conclusion

It has been three months since an outbreak of FMD has been confirmed in the region, with the last report in Hungary on 17 April. The FRZ's have been lifted in Hungary and Protection and Surveillance Zones have been lifted in Slovakia.

Both countries have undertaken extensive surveillance in commercial domestic and wildlife populations, which have not identified any further cases. The lack of reports since mid-April is encouraging, and the recent genomic analysis indicating that there was only one incursion of the virus reduces the uncertainty regarding of potential spread and scope for further outbreaks.

While this is promising, it has been known that FMD virus can remain undetected for several months (for example in [Bulgaria in 2011](#)). Additionally, the initial source of incursion remains unknown and with reports that windborne transmission was involved in the movement of virus between farms, it is a concern that other non-commercial holdings may have been infected.

Given the extended time period during which an FMD outbreak has not been reported, even with the enhanced surveillance, we now consider the risk of incursion of FMD to the UK is '**low (rare but can occur)**'. Due to the number of species FMD can affect, and the multitude of transmission pathways, there is no current global scenario where the risk for FMD is considered to be below 'low'.

We are mindful that these cases in Hungary and Slovakia were the second incursion of FMD into the EU, after that which occurred in Germany. This is alongside other recent outbreaks of transboundary animal diseases, such as African swine fever, sheep pox, peste de petits ruminants and, most recently, lumpy skin disease. Human mediated routes are therefore still a concern for the animal health status of the entire region.

The risk from illegal imports is always difficult to quantify but travellers are reminded that when returning from Europe and other third country areas, those 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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