

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Cyprus

23 February 2026

Disease report

After recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in northern Cyprus, the virus has now been detected on three farms in the Republic of Cyprus. The initial outbreak was confirmed on 20 February on a cattle farm near Livadia, Larnaka and the two subsequent outbreaks were confirmed on 21 February on sheep farms approximately 4km north of the initial outbreak. These outbreaks have been confirmed as serotype SAT 1 ([WAHIS](#)). According to media reports, there have been 25 outbreaks at the time of writing ([Cyprus Times](#)) however, these are yet to be reported by WAHIS. The source of the disease incursion has not yet been determined. This serotype is exotic to Western Asia and the Caucasus region and has potential to spread quickly since livestock are immunologically naïve and highly susceptible to infection with this serotype. The last FMD outbreaks reported from the Republic of Cyprus was serotype O in 2007.

While the continued spread of FMD in the region is concerning, considering the geographical distance of the outbreaks to Great Britain means that the risk of incursion of FMD from this area remains at **low (rare but can occur)**.

Situation assessment

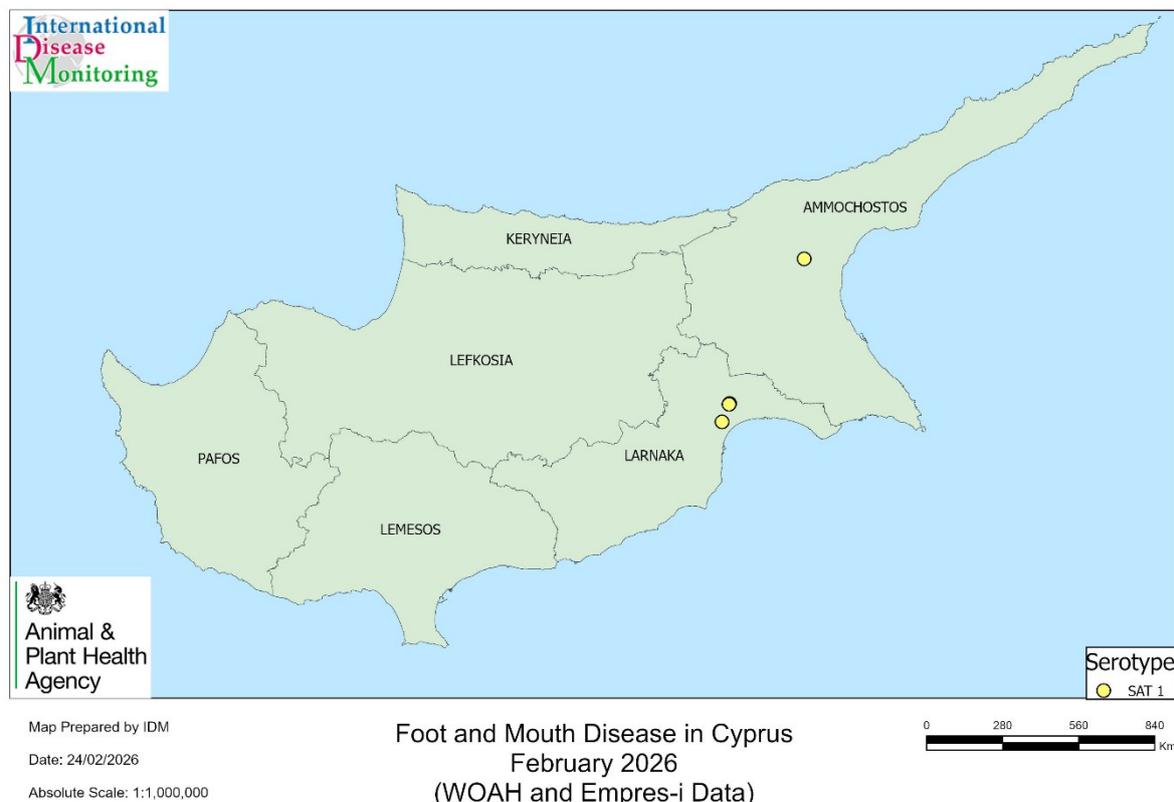


Figure 1: Map of Cyprus displaying the location of FMD outbreaks in Larnaka and Ammochostos. Both WOA and Empres-i data have been used.

Cyprus

The [Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment](#) confirmed the initial outbreak on 20 February on a cattle farm in Livadia, Larnaka. This is located approximately 40km away from the outbreaks confirmed in December 2025 in Lapathos, Ammochostos, northern Cyprus, and roughly 10km away from Larnaka International Airport (see Figure 1 for map of outbreaks). A 3km movement ban has been implemented around the farm for live animals and animal products. All cattle on the premises are to be culled. On 21 February, the ministry confirmed two further outbreaks in Voroklini, 4km north of the initial outbreak in Livadia. According to the Ministry's official statement, the contractor company responsible for managing animal by products did not follow the required procedures for handling the removal and transport of animal by products. The veterinary services have now placed the entire country under quarantine, with measures including a country wide movement ban for 21 days, a closure of abattoirs, closure of livestock units and a ban on entry into infected or suspected premises ([Cyprus placed under strict quarantine as foot-and-mouth spreads | in-cyprus.com](#)).

From PAFF presentations, due to recent outbreaks in the north of the country, the Ministry had intensified surveillance on farms located within 3km of the ceasefire line, with all surveillance samples testing negative for FMD. A total of 250,000 doses of SAT 1 FMD vaccines were delivered to northern Cyprus from Türkiye, with vaccinations underway in the affected village, with plans to extend this to 3km and then 10km around the affected premises. The European Commission have recommended that northern Cyprus undertakes suppressive vaccination on infected farms that are waiting to be culled.

Impact 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 signs.

An [EU wide ban is in place for personal imports](#) of fresh meat, meat products, milk, dairy products, colostrum, colostrum products and certain composite products and animal by-products of ruminant and porcine origin. This is in response to the two previous incursions of FMD that occurred in the EU (Germany and Hungary/Slovakia) during 2025. These special measures were applied from 18 December 2025 until revoked or amended and replaces earlier safeguard declarations. Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules. Those found with these items will need to either surrender them at the border or will have them seized and destroyed.

The FMD virus spreads easily through direct and indirect contact as well as airborne transmission and can quickly infect entire herds. People can facilitate the spread of the virus through fomites via farming equipment, feed and bedding (like hay and straw), footwear, clothing and vehicle tyres that have come into contact with the virus and via carriage of products of animal origin derived from infected animals.

Conclusion

For the first time since 2007, FMD has been reported in the Republic of Cyprus. The introduction of the virus into naïve populations in the south along with recent outbreaks of FMD due to serotype SAT1 in northern Cyprus is particularly concerning. These transboundary movements illustrate the high transmissibility and destructive potential of FMD, reinforcing the urgent need for control and prevention strategies to curb its spread.

While these detections of FMDV represent the third introduction of FMD into Europe in the past twelve months, it presents a low risk to Great Britain. Tracing activities are underway. Imports of bluetongue susceptible species (such as sheep and cattle) from Cyprus have been suspended since December 2022. From 23 February 2026, the import of all live ungulates and FMD-susceptible species has been restricted. The risk from illegal imports is difficult to quantify, but travellers from the affected countries and other third country areas who bring meat or dairy products can face prosecution and a large fine. Illegal trade in live animals of FMD susceptible species from any affected areas to Great Britain is less likely due to the 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.

The risk of introduction of FMD to Great Britain remains at **low**. 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. Swill feeding any animal, whether pigs, poultry, ruminants, or wildlife is illegal and has the potential to cause substantial harm. We would like to remind all keepers of livestock, including smallholders, and the general public that livestock are not to be fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or products of animal origin, thereby observing the swill feeding ban. All keepers of livestock, whether commercial holdings or not, should remain vigilant, as with all biosecurity, these measures are only as effective as the people using them, so proper training should be provided.

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