

Updated Outbreak Assessment #3

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Cyprus and Greece

17 April 2026

Disease report

Cyprus has confirmed a further 46 outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (FMD) serotype SAT1 since our [previous outbreak assessment on 17 March 2026](#), bringing the total number of outbreaks to 85 ([WAHIS Event 7280](#)). This includes the first outbreak of FMD SAT1 in swine on the island, where infection occurred in a herd of 4,000 domestic pigs in Nicosia near the border of the buffer zone between northern and southern Cyprus, outside of the previously established restricted zones.

In Greece, since our last outbreak assessment, 21 more outbreaks of FMD have been reported to WOA, bringing the total number of outbreaks on the Island of Lesbos to 22 ([WAHIS Event 7379](#)). 21 of these have been confirmed as SAT1 FMD with the serotype of the other outbreak currently untyped and/or pending.

The continued spread of FMD in the region is concerning, particularly with confirmed cases in pigs, which are capable of producing aerosolised FMD virus which poses a risk for onward spread. Considering the geographical location of these outbreaks, the risk of incursion of FMD into Great Britain remains at **low (rare but can occur)**.

Situation assessment

Cyprus

Cyprus has reported its first outbreak of FMD SAT1 in swine to WOA on 15 April 2026. The outbreak occurred on a premises with 4,000 domestic pigs and is located close to the border of the buffer zone separating northern and southern Cyprus. The farm is located about 14 km away from previous outbreaks in the Nicosia region and has triggered new 3km protection and 10km surveillance zones.

According to media reports, 2 additional pig farms owned by family members of the farmer from the affected premises are located in the same area. The total number of pigs across all 3 premises is estimated to be around 20,000 animals ([sigmalive.com](#)).

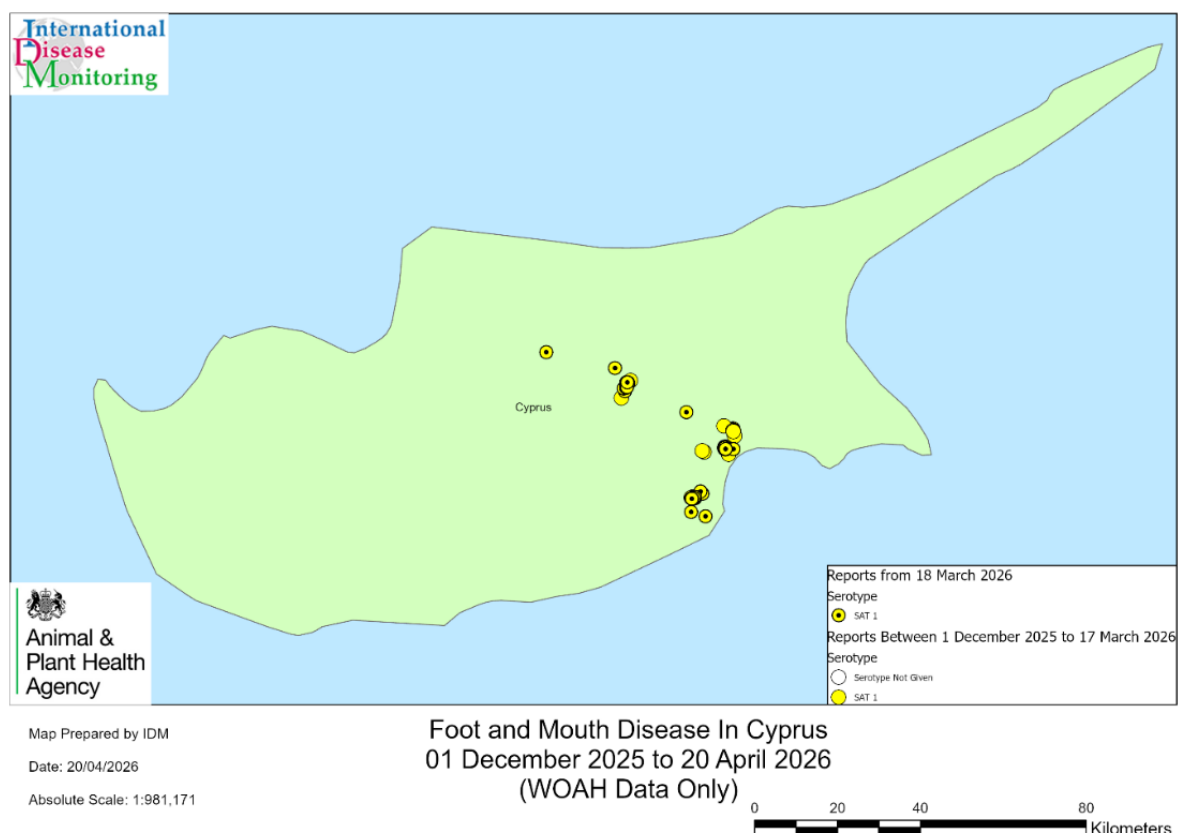
Since our last update on 17 March 2026, Cyprus has reported 46 additional FMD SAT1 outbreaks to WAHIS, including the outbreak on a pig farm discussed above. This brings the total number of outbreaks confirmed in southern Cyprus to 85. 26 of the new outbreaks occurred in Larnaca and 20 in Nicosia.

According to [March PAFF presentations](#), 96% of the cattle population and 72% of the sheep and goat population in The Republic of Cyprus had undergone their first round of vaccination as of 24 March 2026. Vaccine should generate response quickly, within the first week, although it may take up to 3 weeks for full protection. As of 2 April 2026, 52% of cattle and 26.5% of sheep and goats had received the second vaccine dose ([gov.cy](#)). This booster should elicit very good immune responses in the target population. Cattle have been prioritised as part of the emergency protective vaccination strategy. In Larnaca, cattle in the 3 km protection zones surrounding outbreaks were vaccinated first, followed by cattle in the 10 km surveillance zones. All sheep and goat farms in the 10 km restriction zones have now been vaccinated. Similar vaccination strategies will be implemented in the rest of the Republic of Cyprus. In early April, Cyprus' media reported on the country's plans for vaccination of pigs focusing initially on animals in the 10 km restricted zone, before expanding vaccinations nationwide ([philenews.com](#)).

The [March PAFF presentation](#) also highlighted additional mitigation strategies being employed in Cyprus to prevent further spread of FMD, including an island-wide movement standstill of all susceptible animals, prohibition of animal grazing, prohibition of movement of equipment or workers between farms, prohibition of moving feed, manure, fleece and wool, and a suspension of movement of live animals and raw POAO to European Union (EU) Member States and third-party countries.

In early April, the Government of Cyprus issued a statement clarifying their vaccination strategy following the approval of [Commission Implement Decision 2026/782](#). The purpose of the current vaccination strategy is for protection, as opposed to suppressive vaccination where vaccinated animals are eventually slaughtered. The country intends to achieve "FMD-free with vaccination" status from WOA ([gov.cy](#)).

Figure 1: Map of FMD outbreaks in southern Cyprus. The points with a dot in the middle have been reported since our last outbreak assessment on 17 March 2026.



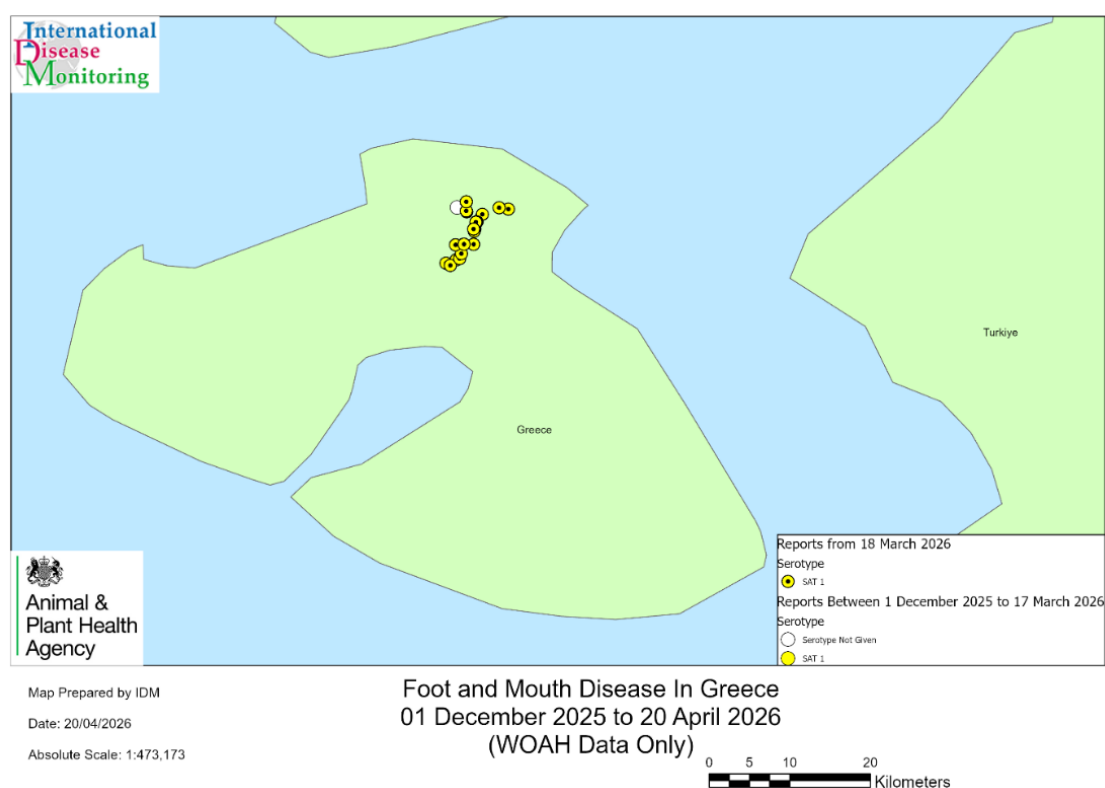
Greece

Since our last report, the initial outbreak on the Island of Lesbos was determined to be FMD serotype SAT1. [According to March PAFF presentations](#), cattle (38 in total) on the affected premises were culled by 18 March 2026. Additionally, sheep and goats located 1km away on a premises owned by the same farmer were also culled. A ban on movement of animals, animal products, animal by-products, and feed-stuffs was implemented to prevent the spread of disease. Greece also introduced zonal containment of milk and dairy products on Lesbos, so that milk collected within one zone cannot move beyond that zone. Disinfection points have been installed at key strategic points on the island to prevent transmission of the FMD virus from vehicles or equipment moving between zones. Clinical surveillance and sampling of all holdings within the protection zone (3 km surrounding outbreaks) is expected to have been completed the week of 30 March 2026 ([March PAFF presentation- Greece](#)). However, according to media reports, vaccination is not currently part of Greece's disease control strategy, and farmers are expressing concerns that measures are focused on culling ([cnn.gr](#)).

Despite these preventative measures, a further 21 additional FMD SAT1 outbreaks on Lesbos have been reported to WOA, bringing the total number on the island to 22 outbreaks. To date, the outbreaks have remained clustered in the centre of the island.

Greece is receiving support from the EU to help control the outbreaks. The country activated the European Civil Protection Mechanism, which provides critical equipment and protection gear for the disease control efforts, and the situation is being managed by the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (reporter.gr). According to media reports, farmer protests on the island are impacting efforts to prevent further spread of the FMD virus. For example, protests at the port of Mytilene prevented the unloading of equipment to help with disinfection efforts (athina984.gr).

Figure 2: Map of FMD outbreaks in Lesvos in Greece. The points with a dot in the middle have been reported since our last outbreak assessment on 17 March 2026.



Impact for Great Britain

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease of cattle, sheep, pigs and other cloven-hoofed animals. It causes 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 pose a risk to humans or a food safety risk. While mortality rates in susceptible species are typically low, the disease can cause fever, decreased appetite, excessive drooling, blisters, decreased production, and other signs.

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.

There were no imports of live FMD susceptible animals (including sheep, goats, cattle and pigs) or their germplasm from Cyprus or Greece in the time period covering 2 incubation periods before the first detected outbreaks in each country (since 23 January 2026 for Cyprus and 16 February 2026 for Greece). The import of all live FMD-susceptible animals and their germplasm from Cyprus and Greece into Great Britain have been temporarily suspended.

Certain products of animal origin (POAO) and animal by-products (ABP) of FMD-susceptible species from Cyprus and Greece are also considered a risk for FMD transmission. There were no imports of raw or untreated POAO or ABP destined for animal consumption in the time period covering 2 incubation periods before the first detected outbreaks in each country. Imports of relevant POAOs and ABPs from both countries are also temporarily suspended unless processed with a treatment that sufficiently mitigates FMDV. Feed and bedding (hay and straw) represent a risk of fomite transmission. There were no imports of hay and straw from Cyprus and Greece, and imports of these commodities have now been restricted from these countries.

In addition to this, 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 multiple disease outbreaks across the EU. These special measures applied from 18 December 2025 until revoked or amended and replace earlier safeguard declarations.

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 may be less likely due to the logistical difficulties and the distances involved, but it cannot entirely be ruled out. As the situation is emerging, there is additional uncertainty regarding how far disease has spread before detection.

Conclusion

The introduction and spread of the FMD virus into naïve livestock populations in Greece, along with recent outbreaks of FMD due to serotype SAT1 in Cyprus, is concerning. In particular, pigs are known to shed large amounts of virus that can lead to aerosol transmission (Alexandersen 2003). 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. With recent religious festivals (Eid and Easter), increased movements of people and animals

may have further spread the FMD virus, and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

The genotype of the FMD virus causing outbreaks in Cyprus has been reported by the EURL (ANSES, France) as SAT1/III, while the virus responsible for cases in Greece is yet to be reported. These detections of FMDV represent the third confirmed (or possibly fourth introduction, depending upon the data from Greece) of FMD into Europe in the past fifteen months. Based on geographical location and other potential pathways, 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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