

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Namibia

16 October 2026

Disease report

Outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) serotype SAT1 have been reported in Namibia on 23 September for the first time since November 2022. These represent the first outbreaks in Namibia's FMD free (without vaccination) zone since it was implemented in the 1960's and formally recognised by WOAHP in 1997. The detection follows an increase of reports of FMD across Southern Africa (due to SAT 1, SAT 2 and SAT 3 serotypes). Notably, a South African FMD outbreak was reported in September approximately 120km from the affected area in Namibia. On 13 October, an outbreak (serotype unconfirmed) was reported in the FMD infected zone in northeastern Namibia to WOAHP.

While the spread of FMD in the region is concerning, considering the geographical distance of the outbreaks to Great Britain, low volume of trade and the rapid implementation of trade restrictions means that the risk of incursion of FMD from this area remains assessed as **low (rare but can occur)**.

Situation assessment

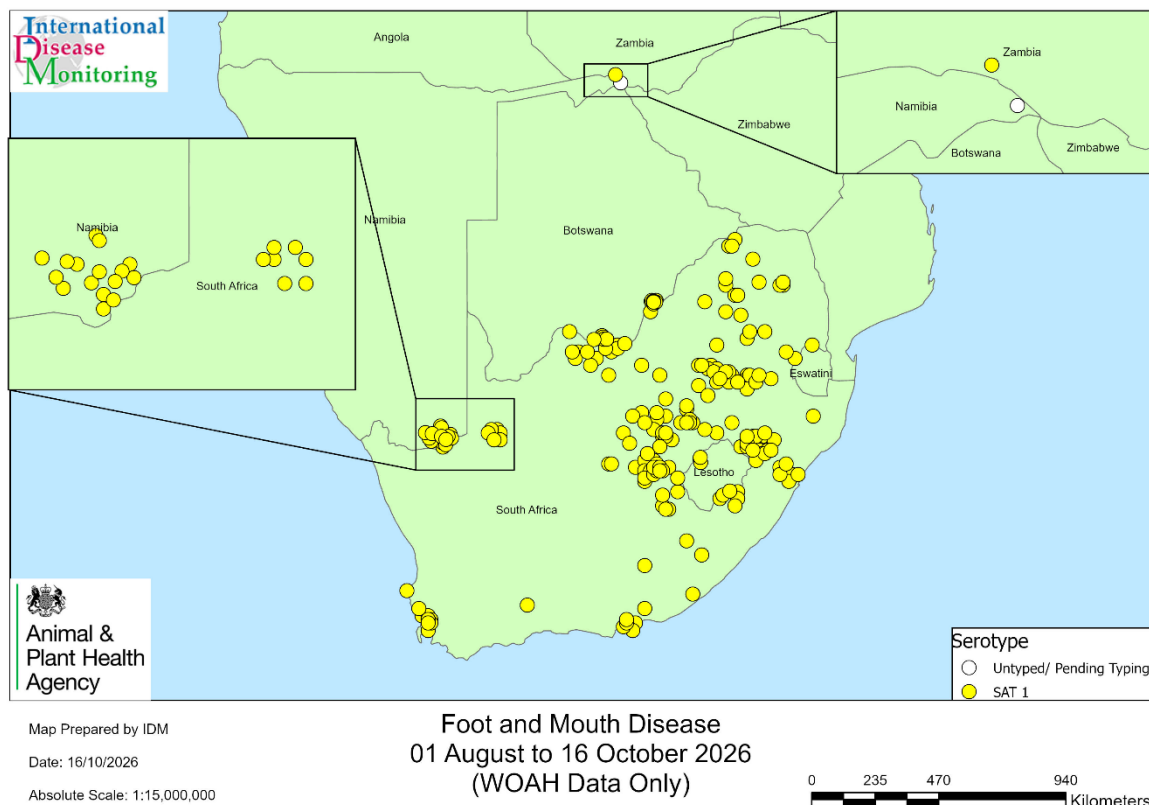


Figure 1: Map of Southern Africa displaying outbreaks of FMD between 1 August and 16 October 2026.

Namibia

On 23 September 2026, Namibia made an immediate notification of FMD to WOA, reporting one outbreak in Karas, southern Namibia. The initial outbreak was reported on a farm housing cattle. From epidemiological comments, 63 out of 75 susceptible cattle were displaying clinical signs consistent with FMD during a routine disease surveillance inspection, carried out by veterinary officials. Samples were taken and submitted to the Central Veterinary Laboratory for diagnosis, where they were positive for FMD virus. Since the initial notification (IN), a further 15 FMD positive farms have been reported to WOA under a follow up report (FUR), bringing the total in the south to 16 farms affected. Livestock holdings included cattle, sheep and goats, with some farms keeping only cattle and others keeping a mixture of all three species. These were detected during ongoing active surveillance, which will help to determine the extent of the outbreak. These additional cases were located within the defined affected area, with the furthest outlying outbreak approximately 80 km from other infected premises. Outbreaks in the south have been confirmed as FMD serotype SAT1.

Implemented control measures include a nationwide prohibition on the movement, trade, import, export, transit and slaughter of live cloven-hoofed animals and their raw products of animal origin. Intensive surveillance and inspections at strategic

locations have also been implemented to support the enforcement of these restrictions.

From [Beacon reports](#), a Critical Containment Response Plan, involving the establishment of a containment buffer zone, repairs to the Namibia-Botswana border fence and the erection of veterinary fencing along high-risk areas of the South African border have been implemented.

These are the first recorded outbreaks of FMD in the FMD free zone in Namibia since it was implemented in the 1960's and formally recognised by WOA in 1997. Historically, FMD outbreaks have been reported in northern Namibia in the FMD infected zone and FMD protection zones (see Figure 2). It is notable that these outbreaks have been reported in the free zone (without vaccination), where animal populations are fully naïve, meaning rapid spread of the virus may occur.

The source of incursion of FMD into southern Namibia has not been determined. However, given the occurrence of recent outbreaks in neighbouring South Africa, at this stage of epidemiological investigations, cross-border spread remains a possible source of introduction.

On 13 October, an outbreak of FMD was reported in Zambezi, northeastern Namibia. This area is part of the FMD infected zone (see Figure 2). The outbreak was reported on a village premises holding 3,500 cattle. Outbreaks were last reported in this area in 2022, of the SAT2 serotype. However, more recently, outbreaks of FMD SAT1 were reported approximately 35km away in Zambia (see Figure 1). At the time of writing, the serotype for the outbreak in the north of Namibia is awaiting official confirmation.

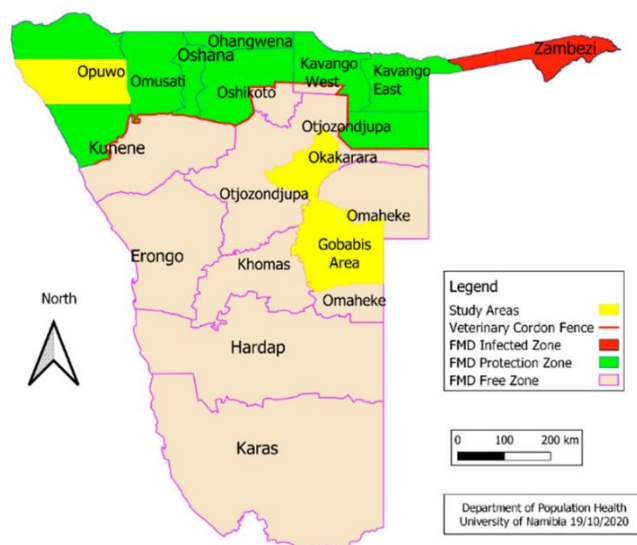


Figure 2: Map of Namibia displaying the FMD infected, protection and free zone (Kaurivi and others., 2021).

Impact for Great Britain

For the first time, FMD has been reported in the free (without vaccination) zone in Namibia. The introduction of the virus into naïve populations in the FMD free areas along with the rapid spread of FMD SAT1 and SAT2 elsewhere in Southern African countries is 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.

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.

The 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.

Prior to these cases, Namibia was approved to export fresh deboned and matured bovine meat, fresh ovine and caprine meat, fresh meat from farmed and wild non-domestic ruminants to Great Britain and animal-by products from these species. However, commercial imports of fresh bovine, ovine and caprine meat from the whole country of Namibia have been suspended through the removal of the relevant import certificates. Namibia's listings for fresh meat of farmed and wild non-domestic ruminants have also been removed, although imports of these products were not previously permitted due to a lack of approved residue control plans. Additional safeguard measures to restrict imports of animal casings and untreated wool and hair from FMD-susceptible species have been introduced. Further restrictions on other animal by-products are under consideration and consignments of relevant animal by-products from Namibia will continue to be held until these measures are formally implemented.

Since 1 January 2026, approximately 677 tonnes of bovine meat have been imported from Namibia, but food security and supply chains are unlikely to be adversely affected by the suspension of imports. There have been no recorded imports from Namibia of fresh ovine meat, fresh caprine meat, or of any animal by-products derived from FMD-susceptible species in the same period. The trade impact of these restrictions is likely to be limited.

Conclusion

Given the above information, along with the significant distance of the outbreaks from Great Britain, 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 emphasise to all keepers of livestock, including smallholders, and the general public to ensure that livestock are not 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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