

# Foreign Animal Disease Prevention Must Be Prioritized Amid Growing Threats



## Background

A 2001 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom, where more than six million animals were slaughtered with an economic cost well into the billions, highlights the significant risk foreign animal diseases pose to animal agriculture and the economies that rely on it. Now, for the first time in 40 years, African swine fever – a highly contagious and deadly viral disease with no treatment or vaccine – has been detected in the western hemisphere. It is therefore imperative that U.S. regulatory policy reflects rising risks and that lawmakers, regulators and industry continue to work together to protect farmers' livelihoods and America's food supply.

## What is foreign animal disease, also known as FAD?

FADs are diseases or pests not currently found in the United States that would inflict significant consequences on both the U.S. food supply and economy. There are several paths by which an FAD can enter the United States including the importation of contaminated products. For this reason, the United States Department of Agriculture has the regulatory authority to allow or deny entry of products and animals into the U.S., and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection is tasked with enforcing the USDA rules. USDA and CPB programs such as the agricultural quarantine inspection program (AQI), which includes the "Beagle Brigade" agricultural canine teams, conduct critically important inspections at the country's ports of entry.

The devastating effects of a disease such as foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever or classical swine fever infecting the U.S. swine herd cannot be overstated. Animals would face severe clinical signs, often times leading to death. Farms would be quarantined, animal movements would be restricted and business would stop. Billions of dollars and many jobs would be lost, and export markets would close immediately.

- > **What do farmers do if they suspect an FAD?** Farmers know that healthy animals ensure safe food for consumers and are committed to continually monitoring the health and well-being of their animals. Farmers also work closely with veterinarians to monitor herd health. If an FAD is suspected, farmers contact their herd veterinarian or state or federal animal health officials for additional guidance.
- > **How the U.S. can prevent an FAD outbreak?** The US swine industry has successfully prevented the introduction of an FAD since the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in 1929. NPPC has been actively working with USDA and CBP for years to prevent and prepare for a potential outbreak of an FAD. Measures we support enhancing include:
  - Building the capacity of USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Veterinary Services field staff to respond to and address an outbreak in the United States and its territories.
  - Expanding the infrastructure and workforce capabilities of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, which conducts surveillance of and testing for FADs.
  - Increasing the capacity of CBP agricultural inspectors at ports of entry to prevent unauthorized meat, animal by-products and other vectors that can carry FADs from entering the country and infecting U.S. agriculture.

We invite you to learn more about policy issues to support and strengthen America's pork producers at [NPPC.org](https://www.nppc.org).

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