

How to Conduct Active Observational Surveillance: A Guide for Herd Health Monitors

In response to a FMD outbreak, animal health officials plan to require **Active Observational Surveillance (AOS)** to reduce the risk that milk will be picked up from farms with cattle that show signs of FMD. An on-farm **Herd Health Monitor (HHM)** is responsible for conducting and documenting surveillance of each herd.

- For each dairy farm, at least one employee must be designated to oversee Active Observational Surveillance (AOS) of the herd. This Herd Health Monitor (HHM) must be prepared to report on the herd's health, particularly any signs of FMD.
- Herd Health Monitors should
 - Have worked on the dairy for the last several months;
 - Be involved in the normal daily activities;
 - Be familiar with the normal health problems; and
 - Be able to recognize and report a change in the health of the cattle.

Signs of FMD

Signs of full-blown FMD in cattle include painful sores and blisters in the mouth, on the feet, and on the teats of animals that quickly rupture into ulcers. If these sores are seen, it means that the FMD virus has been present in the herd for a few days and it is **urgent** to request that an animal health official, such as a representative of the Office of the State Veterinarian, come inspect the herd. In order to control the spread of FMD virus within the herd and between herds, it is very important that infection in the herd be detected as early as possible. Animal health officials are trained in early detection of FMD and can collect appropriate samples to submit for laboratory testing to detect the FMD virus if present.

Many of the clinical signs associated with early stages of FMD infection (fever, lameness, mastitis, slobbering, diarrhea, off-feed, depressed, etc.) may be expected to occur in a herd for a variety of reasons. The designated HHM must be capable of deciding when any of these clinical signs seems more than "normal" and requesting a herd exam by an animal health official.

Early Clinical Signs of FMD:

- Off feed
- Excessive salivation, drooling or lip-smacking
- Dullness, depression, reluctance to move
- Lameness: Reluctance to rise, or stamping or shaking of the feet
- Fever: Spikes typically between 104°F and 106°F and lasts 2-3 days
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Mastitis
- Shivering
- Calf deaths
- Abortions
- Decreased milk yield

Fmd Monitoring Documents (in development)

- *AOS HHM Training Documentation Form*
Provides written documentation of training for personnel designated as HHM(s) for a specific farm.
- *AOS Daily Observation Worksheet*
Provides written documentation that all cattle on a farm have been observed daily by a trained HHM for clinical signs of FMD.
- *AOS Daily Observation Worksheet-Comment Form (optional)*
Allows the HHM to supplement the Daily Observation Worksheet by providing additional details regarding concerns or clinical signs of FMD noted, if desired.
- *AOS Herd Health Record Form (optional)*
Provides an optional method for the HHM to record observations and treatments associated with potential clinical signs of FMD.

OBSERVATION PROCEDURE

A HHM must regularly monitor animal health and be prepared to document observations at least once each day:

- Animals should be observed when they are active, such as:
 - At milking (lactating cows) or while walking to the milk parlor;
 - At feeding;
 - When pushing up feed;
 - At breeding;
 - During herd checks;
 - During heat checks; and
 - When moving animals between pens.
- The best observation will occur in close interaction with livestock in uncrowded areas, when you can observe individual animals
- Be prepared to restrain the animal in a safe and humane manner for further examination as necessary.
- Be familiar with the *AOS Worksheets* and how to complete them, along with recording health data on individual animals with suspicious clinical signs.

DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURE

A HHM will be expected to complete an *AOS Daily Observation Worksheet* for each group of animals on the dairy at least once per day.

- Label each worksheet with the appropriate pen or group ID. The listed pen or group ID should be easily identified by other HHMs, managers, veterinarians, workers, etc. on the premises.
- Check **one** and only one of three possible findings:
 1. No early clinical signs associated with FMD were observed beyond what is considered normal for this group.
 2. Early clinical signs associated with FMD beyond the normal range for this group were observed. A herd veterinarian or animal health authorities have been notified to inspect the animals.
 3. Blisters or sores were noted on the mouth, feet, or teats. A herd veterinarian or animal health authorities have been notified.

- If number 2 or 3 is checked, the HHM should be prepared to provide details of the clinical signs observed to the animal health authorities when they notify them. The animal health authorities will be responsible for making the decision as to whether milk movement should continue while awaiting inspection.
- Sign the worksheet each day and provide additional comments related to their observations on an *AOS Daily Observation Worksheet-Comment Form*.
- Also record health information on individual animals that show clinical signs of FMD, either on the *AOS Herd Health Record Form* or in the animal health record system normally used on that dairy.

All records related to AOS must be available for inspection by animal health authorities managing the FMD outbreak.