

Procedures to Report a Suspected Foreign Animal Disease

IF YOU SUSPECT A FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE (FAD), WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT STEPS TO TAKE TO OBTAIN A DIAGNOSIS?

As a veterinarian, you and the clients you work with are our first line of defense. To initiate a FAD investigation, the first step is recognizing that a disease situation could be the result of the introduction of a foreign animal disease pathogen. The clinical signs and gross lesions associated with a FAD may be very subtle and resemble many common disease conditions. Mildly virulent strains of Classical Swine Fever (Hog Cholera), for example, may present with clinical signs resembling SIV or PRRS infections with little or no gross lesions or the lesions may be masked by those of concurrent diseases. Descriptions and pictures of foreign animal diseases can be found at http://www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/gray_book/index.htm and http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ep/fad_training/bibpage.htm.



It is important that you obtain a complete and thorough history to include questions regarding disease onset, recent foreign travel by employees or visitors, feed sources (i.e. garbage feeders), other species of animals also exhibiting similar or abnormal clinical signs, efficacy of prior treatments, recent animal movements (introductions and shipments), consumption of foreign foods by employees, etc. Answers to these and similar questions may increase your suspicion of a FAD even in the absence of “abnormal” clinical signs or lesions.

Now that you suspect a possible FAD, here are the steps you should take and the actions you should expect:

Steps To Take

1. Do not leave the farm unless absolutely necessary and then only after thorough disinfection.
2. Contact the federal Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) in your state or the State Veterinarian's Office.
 - A. a list of the federal AVIC's contact numbers by state can be found at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/area_offices.htm
 - B. a list of state veterinarians contact numbers can be found at <http://www.usaha.org/links.shtml#state>
3. The AVIC will dispatch a Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) to initiate an investigation within 24 hours of the initial notification.
4. The FADD will set up an appointment to visit the premises, assess the disease situation, collect and submit laboratory samples, execute disease control actions if necessary, and file a report with the AVIC.
5. The AVIC will assign a priority level to the laboratory submissions which will govern the response of the federal lab(s).
6. Further actions may be taken at the discretion of the AVIC in consultation with the FADD, State Veterinarian, and USDA Emergency Programs staff.
7. Laboratory results will be reported to the AVIC who, in turn, will notify the State Veterinarian and the FADD. The FADD will then notify the practitioner and the owner.

It is important that, if you suspect a FAD, you contact the AVIC or State Veterinarian immediately. Do not send samples to any diagnostic lab yourself in order to avoid possible contamination of those labs which could result in further spread of the disease.