



International Animal Health Division

International Animal Disease Monitoring

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment



Ref: VITT 1200/FMD – N Korea

Date: 08 March 2007

Foot and Mouth Disease in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)

Note: Defra's International Animal Health Division (IAHD) monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is among those diseases of major concern.

Disease Report

The authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) have reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD Type O) in cattle in P'yongyang-si province (see map). The last reported outbreak of FMD in North Korea was in 1960 (OIE, 2007).

Situation Assessment

This outbreak only appears to have affected cattle even though pigs were present in greater numbers. At this stage it is not known what strain of FMD type O caused this outbreak.



Three different subtypes of serotype O are known to be present in south-east Asia: (1) the PanAsia strain that spread across most of Asia and into Europe in the late 1990s and early 2000s, (2) an indigenous south-east Asia strain and (3) the Cathay toptotype which usually only affects pigs (D. Paton, IAHD, Pirbright, pers. comm., March, 2007).

EU rules do not allow for importation of susceptible species or their products from North Korea.

Conclusion

The likelihood of the introduction of FMD by legal trade from North Korea to the UK is considered to be negligible on the basis of this disease report and an assessment of the current situation. The possibility of illegal imports introducing the virus from countries affected by FMD is still present and difficult to assess. This emphasises the importance of the effective implementation of border controls and of the ban on swill feeding.

IAHD does not intend to carry out a full risk assessment of this outbreak at this time but will continue to monitor the situation.

References

OIE, (2007). OIE Alert message PRK 07-03-07. Foot and Mouth Disease, Korea (Dem. People's Rep.). Received by e-mail on 07 March 2007.