

VRA 19: What are the risks of causing a new outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) by hunting (drag, any other trial)?

1. SUMMARY OF OVERALL RISK

This risk assessment was compiled according to terms of reference provided by the Scottish Government regarding time of delivery, title of veterinary risk assessments (VRAs) and level of detail required. EPIC scientists created a generic framework suitable for the VRAs; collated and updated existing information on risks; filled gaps in the documents (including references where appropriate); and drafted new VRAs where necessary. These documents may require updating as new information becomes available or legislation develops, or if more in-depth assessment is necessary.

The purpose of this document is to qualitatively assess the risk of the specified activity in the face of an FMD outbreak in the UK. The assessment includes proposed actions to mitigate the risks associated with the specified activity, and which could form the basis of license conditions where necessary.

DEFINITIONS OF RISK LEVEL (OIE, 2004; DEFRA 2011):

Negligible So rare that it does not merit consideration

Very low Very rare but cannot be excluded

Low Rare but could occur Medium Occurs regularly High Occurs very often

Very High: Events occur almost certainly

Overall risk: The risk of allowing the activity described is:

PZ SZ RZ
With no mitigation measures not permitted medium low
With mitigation measures described not permitted medium very low

2. LEGISLATION, DEFINITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

Statutory disease control requirements are applicable to livestock premises on suspicion and confirmation of FMD. When suspicion of disease cannot be ruled out, and diagnostic samples are taken, a Temporary Control Zone is put in place (TCZ) surrounding the suspect premises. On confirmation of disease, a national movement ban (NMB) is enforced by introducing a national Restricted Zone (RZ). A 3 km Protection Zone (PZ) and 10km Surveillance Zone (SZ) are implemented which place restrictions on movements and activities around infected premises to prevent spread of disease. Later in the outbreak, restrictions may be relaxed either through reducing the size of the RZ or through allowing some resumption of normal activities under licence within the RZ, SZ or PZ. In this VRA, RZ is used to refer to areas which are within the RZ, but do not also fall within the PZ or SZ.

Drag or other trail hunting is not permitted in a PZ (FMD (Scotland) Order 2006 Schedule 4, paragraph 15). In a SZ or RZ, drag or other trail hunting is permitted, but only under the authority of a licence granted by the Scotlish Ministers (FMD (Scotland) Order 2006 Schedule 4, paragraph 27, and Schedule 6, paragraph 6).

There are restrictions on horse movements and events during an FMD outbreak. Horses may not be moved off a premises where FMD is suspected or confirmed unless authorised to do so by a licence granted by the Scottish Ministers (FMD (Scotland) Order 2006 Schedule 2, paragraph 11). In a PZ, movements of horses from or to premises which keep

susceptible animals, or into or out of a PZ, can only be carried out under the terms of a licence granted by an inspector. (FMD (Scotland) Order 2006 Schedule 4, paragraph 11,12).

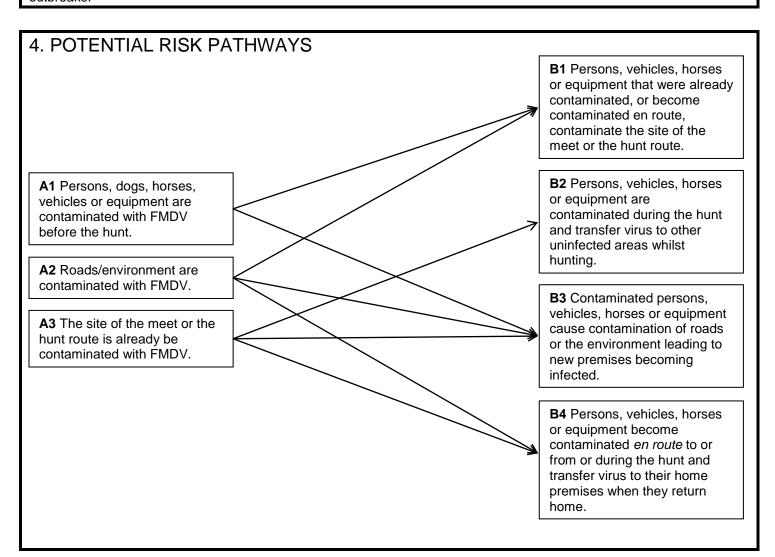
In general, access to infected premises or premises under suspicion of infection is not permitted. Scottish Ministers can prohibit access to land within a PZ, including core paths (FMD (Scotland) Order 2006, article 35). Local authorities can close land for up to six days. In addition landowners can request closure of their land for longer periods - subject to a risk assessment AHVLA and local authorities can sanction closure and notify Scottish Ministers (Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003, chapter 4, paragraph 11).

In this VRA, the term 'agricultural land' or 'agricultural areas' refers to land that is being used or has been used for keeping livestock or other FMD-susceptible animals. It does not include arable land where no livestock have been present for an extended period of time.

Disinfectants must be approved for use by the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) (Scotland) Order 2008 as amended and be used at the FMD Order dilution.

3. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

- (a) Hazard: FMD virus (FMDV)
- (b) <u>Specific risk</u>: During an FMD outbreak people going drag hunting may come into contact with FMDV or with susceptible livestock. There is a risk that FMDV will spread via people or other fomites and cause further disease outbreaks.



5. EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT		
Factors which are likely to affect this probability of exposure are:	Comments and risk estimates if/where appropriate	
Infection source: A1 Persons, dogs, horses, vehicles or	equipment are contaminated with FMDV before the hunt	
In general, risk of contamination is influenced by: Proximity to a premises where FMD has been detected ("infected premises") Presence of animals with undetected or incubating FMD, or failure to report FMD	 Risk of transmission is highest adjacent or close to premises with FMD. Once a NMB is in place, most transmission occurs by local spread (<3k from premises with FMD) (Gibbens et al. 2001, Keeling et al. 2001, Haydon et al. 2003). It is difficult to quantify relative risks associated with different transmission routes within local spread but indirect transmission routes within local spread but indirect transmission via fomites and contamination of roads and environment around premises with FMD are likely to play an important role. Risk of airborne transmission decreases rapidly with distance from the premises with FMD and is only likely to occur over significant distances if many infected animals (especially pigs) are present (Donaldson and Alexanderson 2001). In a PZ there are known infected premises which may be at varying stage of diagnosis, slaughter, cleansing and disinfection. The risk of local transmission from detected infected premises is medium. In a SZ, there are no detected infected premises. The smallest distance at which infected premises could be located would be 3km away. The risk of local transmission from detected infected premises is low. In a RZ, there are no detected infected premises. The smallest distance at which infected premises could be located is 10km so the risk of local transmission from detected infected premises where FMD has been detected ("infected premises"), there may be premises where FMD is present but has not yet been detected. Infected livestock may excrete FMDV for several days before the appearance of clinical signs, potentially leading to transmission or contamination prior to disease detection, particularly in cattle and pigs (Alexanderson et al. 2003, Orsel et al. 2009). FMD in sheep can be difficult to detect clinically as not all animals show clinical signs, and clinical signs are usually mild and short lived (Hughes et al. 2002). In addition, sheep may be inspected less frequently/ thoroughly.	
	analysis of movement data to identify movements of animals from areas where FMD has been detected, before the NMB.	
Stage of outbreak	Early in the outbreak there is increased risk of undetected infection in all zones and lack of information on movements.	

 Origin of vehicles The risk that vehicles are contaminated is influenced the proximity of the home premises (or premises of despatch of transport, if different) to premises with FN and the presence of susceptible livestock with undetected infection at the home premises, as above Movement history of vehicles Movement to other premises increases the probability 		
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Movement history of vehicles Movement to other premises increases the probability		
contamination.		
 Cleansing and disinfection of interior and exterior of vehicles (especially horse-boxes) FMDV is very sensitive to approved disinfectants and good biosecurity will reduce risk of virus transfer via fomites such as personnel, vehicles and equipment. 		
 Length and duration of journey, number of stops en route and proximity of route to premises with FMD Longer journeys, multiple stops and proximity to premises with FMD increase risk that vehicles become contaminated en route. Stopping at multiple premises for collection of horses increases the risk that the vehicle becomes contaminated. Therefore shared transport or transport through a contractor may increase risk of FMD contamination. 		
Likelihood that people are contaminated (including grooms, riders, huntsmen, other personnel, spectators, followers)		
 Recent contact with infected livestock Risk is greatest if people have had contact with infect animals, and next greatest if they have been to premises with FMD. The likelihood and amount of contamination varies with species, stage of infection, degree of contact and cleansing and disinfection. 		
Occupation Likelihood and amount of contamination increases with potential occupational exposure to FMD (e.g. farmer, vet).		
 Cleansing and disinfection prior to arrival Risk of contamination decreases if clean clothing wor and cleansing and disinfection of outerwear has been undertaken. 		
Likelihood that dogs or horses are contaminated before the hunt (dogs and horses cannot be infected with FMDV but may carry the virus mechanically, for example on their paws or hooves)		
 Proximity to premises with FMD See above Risks are highest in the PZ, followed by the SZ then 		
 Presence of livestock with undetected infection at home stables/kennels The risk that horses are contaminated is greatest is infected animals are present. Risk can be reduced by inspecting susceptible livestock regularly for signs of FMD and preventing horses coming into contact with livestock. 		
Location of stable/kennel facilities and exercise areas Risk increases with increasing proximity to premises		

 with FMD. Risk is greatest if persons have had contact with infected animals, and next greatest if they have been to
 premises with FMD. Visitors such as vets and farriers may present a risk. The risk can be reduced by limiting visitors and ensuring appropriate cleansing and disinfection.
Movement to other premises, particularly if there is a high risk of undetected infection, increases the probability of contamination.
Feed and bedding from premises with undetected infection may be contaminated. FMDV has been recorded surviving for 3 months on hay (Bartley et al. 2002).
Equipment used for horses or dogs which has been exposed to susceptible livestock or potential contamination can be cleansed and disinfected. Horses' hooves should be picked out.
•
There is a risk of transmission through equipment such as tack. The risk is reduced by ensuring equipment is cleansed and disinfected before arriving at the event.
ted
 Roads close to premises with FMD represent the highest risk.
are already contaminated
• See A1.
 The risk that the environment is contaminated is greatest if susceptible livestock present at the site of the meet or on the hunt route. Since FMDV can survive in the environment, risk is also increased if the site of the meet or the hunt route have been used for grazing livestock within the last month (longer if cold weather).
The risk that the environment is contaminated increases with increasing level of use
 In other parts of the world, wildlife can play an important role in FMD transmission (Ward et al. 2007). All British deer species are susceptible to infection and can transmit virus to domestic livestock experimentally (Gibbs et al. 1975). Wild boar are also susceptible (Elbers et al. 2003, Hartley 2010). However in Western Europe post-outbreak serosurveys and diagnostic testing of animals with suspicious clinical signs have never revealed positive animals (Elbers et al. 2003, Mouchantat et al. 2005) and there is no evidence that deer or boar have played a role in FMDV spread in UK. The density of wild boar in the UK at present is likely to be too low for boar to be of importance in transmission (Hartley 2010). The risk of disease spread through infected deer or wild boar is therefore negligible, but this risk could change if ecological factors change, such as deer and boar

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	 assessed using up-to-date information for a specific location. Other species can be infected, such as hedgehogs, but are unlikely to be important in transmission. Wildlife can also move FMDV mechanically if they become contaminated (for example scavengers such as seagulls, crows or foxes). Overall, the risks of further spread of FMDV associated with wildlife are very low but any activity which causes disturbance to wildlife does increase this risk, especially close to premises with FMD.
Meteorological conditions Risk of transmission: B1 Persons, vehicles, horses or ed	 Favourable conditions will increase the probability of survival and thus probability of contamination being present. FMD can survive on pasture for a few days in hot weather, and up to 2 to 3 months in bovine faeces at 4°C. Survival duration increases with decreasing temperatures, increasing relative humidity and presence of organic material and varies with virus strain (reviewed by Bartley et al. 2002).
contaminated en route, contaminate the site of the meet	
Contact between vehicles and susceptible livestock	 Movement of vehicles onto land where susceptible livestock are or will be present increases the risk of transmission if vehicles are contaminated. This can be reduced by ensuring cars are parked on hard standing in areas that susceptible livestock do not access. Cleansing and disinfection of wheels and undercarriage can eliminate the risk if done properly. This requires facilities but may be appropriate depending on the level of risk and size of the event.
Total numbers of attendees at hunt (including horses, dogs, personnel, followers)	 Higher numbers increase the risk that some will be contaminated. Drag hunts can involve large groups of people and horses.
Number of contaminated animals, vehicles and personnel at the meet	 Increasing numbers increases the total probable amount of FMDV that would be released, if present. Premises with horses often keep livestock too, so the risk is higher than for example for dog walking.
Proximity of the area where the hunt is held to susceptible livestock	 The greatest risks are associated with the presence of susceptible livestock in the area where the event is being held. Susceptible livestock on adjacent premises are also at increased risk. Since FMDV can survive in the environment, there are also risks for livestock which are later moved onto to an area where contamination has been introduced. If the activity is taking place in areas which are not agricultural land and are never used for grazing susceptible livestock or growing feed or bedding for susceptible livestock, the risks are negligible.
Contact between people and horses and susceptible livestock	 Any potential contact with susceptible livestock increases the risk of transmission. The risk can be reduced by ensuring that people and horses only have access to limited areas, maintaining good perimeter security and ensuring routes are clearly marked.
Distance covered	The potential area that could be contaminated increases

Season The seasons for drap hunting extends from September until March If drag hunts coincide with times when livestock are grazing, there is a higher fisk that livestock may be exposed to FMDV. If drag hunts coincide with times when livestock are grazing, there is a higher fisk that livestock may be exposed to FMDV. If drag hunts coincide with times when livestock are grazing, there is a higher fisk that livestock may be exposed to FMDV. If drags have access to susceptible livestock, or by covering lager distances are able to access contaminated. Risk grade access to susceptible fivestock or by covering lager distances are able to access contaminated. Risk contaminated areas, there is an increased risk that they will contaminate an area with FMDV or become contaminated. Risks are likely to be significant risk of disturbing natural fauna. Risks are likely to be significant plower with drag or trail hunting where a set route is used, compared to traditional for hunting. Risks are likely to be significant risk of disturbing natural fauna. Risks are likely to be significant plower with drag or trail hunting where a set route is used, compared to traditional for hunting. Contamination before starting activity Risk of transmission: B2 Persons, vehicles, horses or equipment foot baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow wear as loc cleaned and district foot baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow wear as loc cleaned and district of baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow wear as loc cleaned and district of baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow wear as loc cleaned and district of baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow were also cleaned and district of baths can be effective at reducing contamination, as long as flow were also cleaned and district of baths and transfer virus to other uninfected areas whilst hunting Cortiact with infected areas whilst hunting Cortiact with in		with the distance covered by the hunt route	
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6. CONSEQUENCE ASSESSMENT

Spread of FMD to uninfected premises.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

The movement of people and horses to, from and during drag hunting does carry a risk of indirect spread of FMD via fomites to uninfected farms. Indirect transmission of FMDV via fomites is an important source of infection, and any vehicles, people, equipment etc. which come into contact with FMDV, risk passing disease to any livestock they come into contact with. However there is little information on the real importance of countryside access in FMD spread, meaning it is difficult to quantify this risk accurately. The risks associated with access to the countryside during an FMD outbreak are predominantly influenced by the likelihood that people will already be contaminated or that they will come into contact with contaminated land or infected but undiagnosed livestock whilst in the countryside. The highest risks are therefore associated with people/horses/dogs that have had contact with infected livestock, or people/horses/dogs that come into contact with livestock whilst hunting. The risks are higher in the PZ and to a lesser extent to SZ, since there are likely to be undetected premises with FMD, and people and other fomites are more likely to have come into contact with infected livestock.

Risks associated with drag hunting are less than those associated with traditional fox hunting due to the increased level of control over the route, but likely more significant than other equestrian events such as eventing or point to pointing due to the length of the route.

Potential risk management options:

- (i) Do not permit drag hunting.
- (ii) Do not permit drag hunting in areas where the risk of FMDV being present is greatest (ie in a PZ at any time, in early stages of an outbreak in a SZ or RZ).
- (iii) Preventing participation by people who keep or handle susceptible livestock in the course of their work, particularly in a PZ or SZ, and so are most likely to have been exposed to and contaminated by FMDV.
- (iv) Requiring participants to meet conditions regarding cleansing and disinfection.

There is no veterinary justification for automatically preventing access to the countryside at a GB or Scottish level. Real risks remain, particularly close to premises with FMD, but the risk is very low at larger distances from premises with FMD, particularly once the early stage of an outbreak have passed and the risk of undetected infection is low. Drag hunting in the Restricted Zone represents a low risk and can be permitted once the initial stages of the outbreak have passed and the probability of undetected premises with FMD has reduced. Drag hunting in the Surveillance Zone represents a higher risk of moving FMDV between premises due to the proximity of infected premises and the risk that undisclosed infection may be present, particularly in the early stages of an outbreak.

The risk is:

PZ SZ RZ
With no mitigation measures not permitted medium low
With mitigation measures below not permitted medium very low

These risk levels were assigned based on scientific literature available and expert opinion where appropriate by considering the risk pathways and the factors affecting each risk pathway, as listed in sections 4 and 5.

8. SUGGESTED RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

The risk levels given in section 7 assume that the follow risk mitigation measures are followed:

A. At home premises, including gallops, kennels and other exercise areas

- (i) If susceptible livestock are present
- ensure physical separation from horses/dogs and land used by horses/dogs
- inspect susceptible livestock regularly for evidence of FMD.

- (ii) Ensure that feed and bedding are from FMD free sources.
- (iii) Vehicles used to carry horses or dogs should not have been used to transport susceptible livestock.
- (iv) Disinfect transport vehicle, equipment and personnel before leaving home and before re-entry. Pick out and disinfect horses' feet. Ensure dogs or horses' coats are clean and groom/bath where necessary.
- (v) Horses and dogs should not be allowed to participate in a drag hunt if they originate from or have visited a stables or exercise area situated within the PZ in the previous 30 days.
- (vi) Avoid visiting other premises en route as much as possible. If other premises are visited they should comply with the same standards as the home premises described above.

B. At location where hunt is held

- (i) Participants should not have visited an infected premises or any premises within the PZ where susceptible livestock are kept within the past 7 days.
- (ii) Ensure that susceptible livestock are not present on land used for hunting. If the land used for the hunt route has been grazed by sheep or cattle, it should not be used for hunting for at least 28 days after the last animal was removed, and the land should be kept free of livestock for at least 28 days thereafter.
- (iii) Ensure route planning and perimeter security to avoid any possible contact with susceptible livestock.
- (iv) Participants should carry equipment for cleaning and disinfecting horses, vehicles and personnel on arrival at meet and before departure for home premises. Water and appropriate disinfectant should be carried in the vehicle for this purpose. Approved disinfectants must be used at the correct concentration.
- (v) All participants (including followers, huntsman etc.) should wear clean clothing and footwear when joining the hunt.
- (vi) All participants should disinfect footwear, and if mounted, their horses feet, before starting to hunt.
- (vii) Participants should ensure they bring only the amount of feed and bedding needed, and return used bedding to home premises for disposal.

Horses and dogs should be accompanied by an owners declaration that

- -They are from premises not situated within a Protection Zone,
- -They have had no contact with susceptible livestock,
- -If there are susceptible livestock on their premises of origin, these have been inspected prior to loading and no evidence of FMD was found.
- -They have been transported in dedicated horse transport which has not been used to carry susceptible livestock, and which was cleaned and disinfected before the horse(s) were loaded.

9. SOURCES OF EXPERT ADVICE

This VRA is based on the following VRAs:

VRA 2001 #26 (AHVLA) "What is the risk of causing a new outbreak of FMD by hunting?" Authors: R. Jones, Lisa Gallagher, Dr. Louise Kelly, Dr. Marion Wooldridge

VRA 2001 #12 (AHVLA) "What is the risk of causing new outbreaks of FMD by staging a specific equestrian event on agricultural land?" Authors Dr Wooldridge, L Gallagher, Dr Kelly, C Livesey, C Proudman, J Woods, P Kitching, KC Taylor, A Turnbull

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12. NOTES

None