Notice to Industry: Animal Health Starts on the Farm

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is reminding livestock producers of the pivotal role they play in protecting animals from serious diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), which has been kept out of the country for over half a century.

The recent outbreaks of FMD in Japan and South Korea are strong reminders of the importance of practising sound on-farm biosecurity. Both countries had been considered free of FMD—Japan since 2000 and South Korea since 2002.

Producers can take simple steps such as limiting access to animals, closely monitoring the health of the herd or flock, and immediately reporting any suspicion of illness to a veterinarian.

Producers should also ensure that student and seasonal workers are fully aware of farm biosecurity protocols, and report if they have visited, or are planning to visit, another farm. Farm workers or visitors who have recently been in countries where FMD has been detected should not be allowed access to livestock for at least five days after entering Canada.

The CFIA takes decisive action to limit the potential risks to Canadian livestock of FMD outbreaks in other countries. The Agency does not allow imports of susceptible animals and animal products from countries that are not recognized as being "free of FMD," unless the products have been processed in a manner that destroys the virus.

A list of countries that are recognized by Canada as being free of FMD is available on the following web page: www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/pol/ie-2001-18e.shtml.

Travellers entering Canada from any country are required to declare all animals and animal products. They must also report if they have been on a farm or exposed to animals while in another country, or if they will be visiting a farm while in Canada.

FMD is a contagious viral disease that affects a range of animals including cattle, swine, sheep and goats. The virus can survive on footwear, clothing and equipment for up to five days. There is no human health or food safety risk associated with FMD; however, it can have devastating impacts on animal health and the livestock sector.

For more information on the measures you can take to protect the health of your animals, visit www.inspection.gc.ca/biosecurity. More information on FMD and the CFIA's disease control activities is available at www.inspection.gc.ca.

For any of the above information, you can also call the CFIA toll-free at 1-800-442-2342.