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Signs

Signs can vary from inapparent, mild to severe, depending on the strain of the virus, exposure dose, species, breed, age, host immunity and trauma to the skin (which facilitates viral entry).

Early (podromal) stage

Animals may begin to show signs of illness before the appearance of characteristic foot-and-mouth disease lesions.

These include:

- Depression.
- Fever (may appear 1-2 days before the vesicles and persist for 2-3 days after their formation).
- Drop in milk production.
- Feet may be hot to the touch, and tender (even before lesions become evident).

Clinical stage-lesions

The formation of vesicles on the mouth, feet and teats is characteristic of FMDV infection. Vesicles may rupture leaving erosions, which will heal over the course of 10 days. Regrowth of epithelium to full thickness and of tongue papillae may take longer, whilst scarring is common, and its effects may be evident for several weeks or longer.

Clinical stage lesions

- **Inappetence.** Cattle affected by oral lesions will often be inappetent. Fever is also associated with inappetence and occasionally, abortion.
- **Salivation.** The mouth lesions are painful and may result in grinding of the teeth, drooling (strings of saliva may be noticed) or smacking of the lips, leading to frothing at the mouth.
- **Lameness.** Acute foot lesions are painful, and lameness may also occur following secondary bacterial infection of the feet or joints above.
- **Milk yield.** milk production can be affected in lactating animals (milk drop can be one of the first signs). Recovery of milk production is variable and gradual. It may start a week or more after onset (depending on severity). In some cases it may not return to normal levels until the following lactation or be permanently reduced (especially in the case of permanent damage due to secondary mastitis).
- **Sudden death in young animals:** myocarditis may lead to sudden death in young animals.
- In cattle living in hot countries, **heat intolerance** and **failure to thrive** have also been described.