



Treating Clinical Signs and Symptoms of Livestock infected by Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)

Livestock diseases that cause mouth sores, blisters, fever, and hoof lesions - such as Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) - can lead to severe discomfort, reduced feed intake, weight loss, and decreased productivity. While there is no direct cure for viral diseases like FMD, supportive treatment plays a critical role in relieving pain, preventing secondary infections, maintaining hydration, and supporting recovery.

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Primary objective of treatment is not to eliminate the virus, but to:

- Reduce pain and fever of and encourage the livestock to continue eating and drinking;
- Prevent dehydration;
- Maintain cleanliness of lesions;
- Avoid secondary bacterial infections;
- Prompt supportive care significantly that improves animal welfare and reduce complications.

All treatments, especially the use of anti-inflammatory medication or antibiotics, should be administered under veterinary guidance to ensure safe and responsible use. The following guidelines outline practical supportive measures for managing common clinical signs observed in affected livestock.

Symptom	Treatment
Mouth sores and blisters that burst.	Provide soft, lush grass or soft fodder to make eating less painful for animals with mouth sores. Offer clean water frequently to prevent dehydration.
Fever and lesions in the hoof of a cow	NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Flunixin or Meloxicam) are used under veterinary guidance to reduce pain and fever. A topical gel called Tri-Solfen (with local anaesthetics and antiseptics). Some communities use washing lesions with soda ash or natural remedies to help cleanliness and reduce discomfort.
Lesions on teats	Spray solution that Kyron Laboratories (compounding company) can mix. It contains a local anaesthetic and antibiotics. This is only available at vets.
Fluid-filled blisters	Clean blisters/lesions gently with mild antiseptic solutions (e.g., normal saline, dilute potassium permanganate). Keeping feet and mouths clean helps avoid secondary bacterial infection.
Secondary Infections	Antibiotics like oxytetracycline or others may be used only if bacterial infection occurs after the blisters open. They do not kill the FMD virus or cure the disease, but help prevent complications.

Reporting and Contact Information

Suspected cases of Foot-and-Mouth Disease must be reported immediately to the nearest State Veterinarian. A person can also contact the Garden Route Emergency Call Centre on ssss044 805 5071 / 081 709 5193

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