



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Media release

Biosecurity vigilance brought to the fore

As part of the Australian Government's response to the spread of animal diseases in the region, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has increased its surveillance and testing of meat and other animal products, both at the border and through targeted checking of retail outlets.

Some pork products have been removed from supermarket shelves after viral fragments of both foot and mouth disease (FMD) and African swine fever (ASF) were detected during testing.

This find does not change Australia's disease-free status for FMD and ASF.

There is no threat to human health from these diseases.

During a recent purchasing and testing campaign of food for sale in supermarkets around Australia, one sample tested positive for FMD and ASF viral fragments– the test does not indicate live virus. This sample was from pork floss offered for sale in Melbourne.

Pork floss is a processed, dried meat product that can be imported if it meets strict import conditions that mitigate the risk of exotic diseases, including ASF and FMD. The product was processed, but investigations have not found evidence that the treatment was to Australia's requirements.

Out of an abundance of caution, officers have seized product from all linked supermarkets and a warehouse in Melbourne.

If the public have any of this pork floss product, please return them to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry office in your capital city. If you are unsure about a concerning product or would like further information, please contact the department.

A number of other pork products for retail sale around Australia have tested positive for ASF viral fragments. Officers are in the process of securing products and undertaking investigations. Further information will be provided when these investigations have been completed.

The department has also been testing meat products seized at the border from travellers and through the mail.

Recently a passenger was intercepted with a beef product. When prompted by a biosecurity officer, the passenger declared a number of items of biosecurity concern at the border and was issued with a warning. The seized beef item tested positive for FMD viral fragments.

The public, retailers and importers are asked to be vigilant in their purchases, to play their part in protecting Australia from these terrible diseases.

The government will continue to step up this surveillance activity and will prosecute breaches of biosecurity rules to the full extent of the law. This is across all pathways, not just travellers through airports.

Pig owners must not feed meat, animal products or imported dairy goods to their pigs. This is called swill feeding and is illegal throughout Australia.

Foot and mouth disease is considered one of Australia's greatest biosecurity threats to livestock and an incursion of FMD or ASF would have severe consequences for Australia's animal health, trade and economy and our regional communities.

Breaches of Australia's biosecurity are taken very seriously. Penalties for those who do the wrong thing include imprisonment for up to 10 years or a fine of up to \$1,110,000 (or \$5,550,000 for corporate entities) or both.

Everyone has a role in preventing harmful pests and diseases from entering Australia. If you are travelling, importing goods or ordering goods through the mail, be aware of what is permitted entry to Australia. You can do this by checking the website at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/travelling/bringing-mailing-goods>.

The department can be contacted on 1800 900 090 or online at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/about/contact/online-enquiry>.

Images available [here](#)

Background

There has not been an incursion. Australia is free from foot and mouth disease and African swine fever.

This is not the first time that routine testing has identified viral fragments in seized products and does not change Australia's FMD and ASF status.

In relation to FMD viral fragments:

- 2 products tested FMD viral fragment positive – products seized at an airport – early 2019
- 3 products tested FMD viral fragment positive – products seized at an international mail centre – Sept 2019
- 2 products tested FMD viral fragment positive – products seized at an airport – early 2021

