

Notifiable animal diseases

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Exotic notifiable animal disease outbreaks can have public health, economic and social impacts in the affected livestock or non-commercial animal sector. These outbreaks can also have wider industry, trade and community consequences. Contingency planning helps to maintain the good health of farmed, non-commercial animals and the livestock industry.

The risk of an incursion of exotic notifiable animal disease in the UK remains ever-present. It is important that we all maintain the highest levels of vigilance and continue to build on our existing high level of preparedness.

Outbreaks of exotic disease present a significant threat to farming, rural communities, animal keepers and the economy. We all have a shared interest in a rapid and effective response. This limits the potential spread of disease and ensures that those parts of the UK that can show they are free from disease can be recognised at the earliest opportunity.

Coordinating an effective response

In the event of an exotic notifiable disease outbreak in animals, there will be a coordinated approach to disease control and eradication, with close working between each country's administration, operational partners and stakeholders.

Each country in the UK produces its own contingency plan that sets out the structures and systems used to coordinate an effective response within its own jurisdiction. Coordination between administrations is crucial to effective and early disease control, and to enable disease-free status to be recovered without delay.

In Great Britain, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) – working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government and Welsh Government – takes the operational lead in preparing for, and controlling, outbreaks and incidents of exotic notifiable diseases of animals. In Northern Ireland, this role is undertaken by its Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Contingency plans

Each country in the UK publishes a contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals (see below). This sets out the roles, responsibilities, systems and structures in place to respond to disease and highlight important work undertaken to prevent disease incursion and prepare for emergencies.

If disease does occur in the UK, the relevant administrations of each country will act swiftly and decisively to:

- protect the health and safety of the public and those directly involved in controlling the outbreak
- eradicate the disease and regain disease-free status
- minimise the burden on the taxpayer and public, as well as the economic impact of the outbreak on industry

For further information see:

- [UK contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases](#)
- [Welsh Government Contingency Plan for Exotic Notifiable Diseases of Animals](#)
- [Scottish Government exotic diseases of animals: Contingency framework plan](#)
- [Northern Ireland Government Contingency Planning for Epizootic Disease](#)

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