

Collection: Notifiable diseases in animals

Updated: Contact details for reporting a notifiable disease updated.

'Notifiable' diseases are animal diseases that you're legally obliged to report to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), even if you only suspect that an animal may be affected.

Notifiable diseases can be:

- endemic – already present in the UK, such as bovine TB
- exotic – not normally present in the UK, such as foot and mouth disease

Some endemic and exotic diseases are zoonotic which means they can pass between animals and humans, such as rabies.

If you suspect a notifiable animal disease you must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Wales, contact 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, contact your local [Field Services Office](#). Failure to do so is an offence.

What happens if you suspect a notifiable disease

If you suspect an exotic notifiable disease:

1. Report it by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.
2. APHA vets will investigate – they usually visit your premises and carry out an enquiry. The APHA duty vet will tell you what restrictions should be applied to your premises before the APHA veterinary inspector arrives.
3. If the APHA veterinary inspector suspects a notifiable disease, they will take samples for testing (this may involve killing the suspected animal before taking samples).
4. They put restrictions on your premises. This means you must at least stop moving animals susceptible to the disease on or off the premises. It can also include stopping the movement of anything that can transmit disease, like meat products, equipment or vehicles.
5. If certain diseases are suspected (particularly foot and mouth disease or African horse sickness) a temporary control zone will be introduced around your premises. This restricts the movements of animals susceptible to the disease.
6. Restrictions remain in place until the investigation is complete and an exotic notifiable disease is ruled out.

What happens if a notifiable disease is confirmed

If a notifiable disease is confirmed:

1. Action will be taken on the infected premises to reduce the risk of the disease spreading, including movement restrictions. For some diseases, like foot and mouth disease and African swine fever, this will include culling all susceptible animals. Premises are then cleaned and disinfected with strict rules on restocking.
2. The government investigates where the disease came from and whether it has spread.
3. The government puts restrictions on all premises where the disease is likely to have spread from or to (for example when animals have been moved).
4. Further restrictions in a wider area may be introduced, depending on the risk of the disease spreading. In the case of foot and mouth disease in particular, animal movements would be restricted throughout the country. For some diseases control zones are automatically applied. APHA will tell you what action to take – this depends on the nature of the disease and EU requirements.
5. The following activities that could spread disease may be banned:
 - hunting or shooting
 - animal gatherings (like shows)
 - exports

Controlling exotic notifiable diseases

Contingency plans outline how the government will manage an exotic notifiable disease outbreak:

- [Contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases for England](#)
- [United Kingdom contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals](#)

How to prevent notifiable diseases

You can help prevent notifiable diseases by following:

- [strict biosecurity practices](#)
- [rules on imports and exports](#)
- [rules on feeding to farmed livestock](#)

Animals or birds spared from culling

For most notifiable diseases, there are legal powers to cull animals to prevent the spread of disease during an outbreak.

Certain animals and birds, including breeds at risk, may be spared from culling if this doesn't compromise controlling the disease (this isn't guaranteed).

Find out more about [animals and birds that may be spared from culling](#).

Compensation when animals are slaughtered compulsorily

For some notifiable diseases, you may get [compensation if your animals or birds are compulsorily culled](#).

Get notified about exotic disease outbreaks

You can get the latest news about exotic notifiable disease outbreaks from the [APHA subscription service](#).