# Europe faces border closures amid foot-and-mouth disease outbreak



A significant virus outbreak has led to stringent border closures in Europe, following concerns regarding the potential origins and implications of the virus, described by some officials as possibly linked to a "biological attack." The resurgence of foot-and-mouth disease has been confirmed in Hungary, marking the first occurrence in over fifty years. The prompt response from neighbouring countries saw Austria and Slovakia closing numerous entry points to Hungary, an action informed by reports from the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Initial identification of the virus took place on a cattle farm near Hungary’s northwestern border. Speculation regarding its origins has arisen from a Hungarian government spokesperson, who suggested the possibility of the virus being "artificially engineered." This spokesperson noted that they have not dismissed the chance that the outbreak could be the result of a biological attack.

The chief of staff to Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Gergely Gulyas, stated, "At this stage, we can say that it cannot be ruled out that the virus was not of natural origin; we may be dealing with an artificially engineered virus." However, no specifics regarding potential perpetrators of such an act have been made available.

In response to the outbreak, nearly 1,000 farms in Hungary have been inspected by animal health officials, with traces of the disease detected at four locations. Verbal reports from an overseas laboratory have raised suspicions regarding the virus's origins, but Gulyas added that these claims remain unverified.

As of December, Hungary reported a cattle population of approximately 861,000, accounting for around 1.2% of the total cattle stock in the European Union. Reports indicate that thousands of livestock have been culled in an effort to contain the disease, with significant ramifications for the agricultural sector. For instance, Paul Meixner, a farm owner with dual Austrian-Hungarian citizenship, shared his experience after having to cull 3,000 cattle and other animals, leading to an estimated loss of 1.5 billion forint (roughly $4.09 million). Speaking to The Independent, he recounted the emotional distress experienced by him and his workers, stating, "Everyone was just standing there, crying and saying that this cannot be true, that this was impossible." Nevertheless, Meixner expressed determination to rebuild his operations, mentioning plans to begin harvesting and storing hay in preparation for the future.

The situation has resulted in rapid responses at the border, with images illustrating the establishment of disinfection stations at various entry points. Personnel in hazmat suits have been seen inspecting trucks and cargo, ensuring thorough disinfection procedures are implemented. Vehicles are required to pass through makeshift decontamination stations, where extensive cleaning efforts are conducted as part of the broader strategy to halt the virus's spread.

As efforts continue to manage the outbreak, the agricultural community in Hungary is faced with unprecedented challenges and uncertainty regarding the future.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://news.sky.com/story/hungary-suggests-foot-and-mouth-outbreak-could-be-biological-attack-13345705> - This article supports claims of foot-and-mouth disease in Hungary, suggesting it could be linked to a biological attack, and details the efforts to contain the outbreak.
* <https://www.swinehealth.org/foot-and-mouth-disease-found-in-hungary/> - Corroborates the confirmation of foot-and-mouth disease in Hungary and provides background on the outbreak's first occurrence in over 50 years.
* <https://whbl.com/2025/04/10/hungary-investigating-outbreak-of-foot-and-mouth-disease-orbans-chief-of-staff-says/> - Supports the details of the investigation and quotes from Gergely Gulyas regarding the possibility of an artificially engineered virus.
* <https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/official-disease-status/fmd/2024/fmd-hungary-2025/> - This World Organisation for Animal Health link would provide official status reports on foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks, supporting the international monitoring and concern.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/foot-and-mouth-disease-hungary-farm-owner-losses-b2460219.html> - Although the exact link is not available, The Independent is reported to have covered stories related to the losses faced by farm owners like Paul Meixner, which aligns with the economic impact described.