# Hungary faces foot-and-mouth disease outbreak amid biological attack concerns



Officials in Hungary are grappling with a serious outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that was detected for the first time in over half a century last month. The discovery, which occurred on a farm in Hungary's northwest, has led to the slaughter of thousands of cattle in an effort to contain the highly contagious virus. This situation has raised suspicions among government officials, who are contemplating the possibility of a "biological attack."

Gergely Gulyas, the chief of staff to Prime Minister Viktor Orban, addressed the media regarding the outbreak, stating, "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.” He further indicated that while discussions concerning responsibility for a potential biological attack are ongoing, these claims are based on verbal evidence received from a foreign laboratory and have not yet been confirmed.

Foot-and-mouth disease is a viral infection that predominantly affects cloven-hoofed animals, such as cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and deer. Animals infected by the virus typically exhibit severe symptoms, including fever and painful blisters in the mouth and between the hooves. While the disease poses no direct threat to human health, it can result in significant economic ramifications, leading to trade restrictions and fears of further agricultural disruptions.

In response to the outbreak, neighbouring countries Austria and Slovakia have taken precautionary measures by closing dozens of border crossings. Slovakia has declared a state of emergency following the identification of several cases on its territory, specifically across five farms in the southern region.

In light of the unfolding situation, the UK government has announced that it will extend a ban on personal meat imports as a means to safeguard British farmers from the disease. Effective from April 12, travellers will be prohibited from bringing in meat derived from cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs, along with dairy products from EU countries into Great Britain. Farming Minister Daniel Zeichner commented on the government's stance, stating, "This government will do whatever it takes to protect British farmers from foot & mouth."

As efforts to combat the outbreak continue, Hungary's agricultural sector faces significant challenges, with the country's cattle stock reported to be around 861,000 at the end of last year, accounting for approximately 1.2 per cent of the EU's total. However, with the ongoing culling of cattle, the long-term impacts on both local and regional agriculture remain uncertain. The situation continues to evolve as authorities monitor the spread of the virus and strive to implement measures aimed at containment and control.

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 corroborates the detection of foot-and-mouth disease in Hungary for the first time in over half a century and mentions the possibility of a biological attack as suggested by government officials.
* <https://www.swinehealth.org/foot-and-mouth-disease-found-in-hungary/> - This link confirms the detection of foot-and-mouth disease on a cattle farm in Hungary and highlights the control measures implemented.
* <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/04/06/austria-closes-off-24-border-crossings-with-hungary-slovakia-after-foot-and-mouth-disease-> - This news report details the closure of border crossings by Austria with Hungary and Slovakia in response to the outbreak, as well as Slovakia's state of emergency declaration.
* <https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2025/04/uk-extends-ban-on-meat-imports-to-protect-from-foot-and-mouth-disease/> - Unfortunately, this specific URL was not found in the search results, but it would corroborate the UK's decision to extend the ban on meat imports.
* <https://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/oie/disease_info/docs/en/Foot%20and%20Mouth%20Disease.pdf> - Unfortunately, this specific URL was not found in the search results, but it would provide information about foot-and-mouth disease, its symptoms, and impact.
* <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/press/pressreleases/2025/april/title-79250-en.html> - Unfortunately, this specific URL was not found in the search results, but it would likely detail international responses or updates related to foot-and-mouth disease, possibly discussing the EU's stance.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/world-news/virus-outbreak-shuts-borders-europe-31407089> - Please view link - unable to able to access data