

100,000 Egypt cattle hit by foot-and-mouth: vets

March 27 2012

Nearly 100,000 head of cattle are believed to have been struck by foot-and-mouth disease in Egypt, where a major new outbreak is threatening the entire region, veterinary sources warned on Tuesday.

Essam Abdel Shakur, the head of Egypt's central quarantine service, said 93,734 head of cattle are believed to have been hit by the disease since February, of which 9,022 had died.

The highest rate of infection is in the Nile Delta region, he said, cited by the official MENA news agency.

On Thursday, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned that a major new foot-and-mouth outbreak in Egypt could threaten the whole of North Africa and the Middle East.

The UN food agency said it was working with the [Egyptian government](#) to prevent the disease from spreading, but that failing to do so could have serious implications for food security in the region.

While foot-and-mouth disease has circulated in Egypt for some years "this is an entirely new introduction of a [virus strain](#) known as SAT2, and livestock have no [immune protection](#) against it," the FAO said.

Official estimates last week put the number of suspected cases at more than 40,000, with more than 4,600 animals, mostly calves, already dead.

Farmers have been urged to limit [animal movement](#), avoid buying animals, and to burn or bury the carcasses of dead animals.

According to FAO's livestock [census data](#), 6.3 million head of cattle and buffalo and 7.5 million sheep and goats are at risk in Egypt.

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