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Korea Battling its Largest Outbreak of FMD

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

Pest/Disease Occurrences

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Report Highlights:

Korea is facing its largest ever foot and mouth disease (FMD) crisis with a reported 194,000 animals culled to date. The virus has hit the nation's two provinces home to the nation's livestock industry. Cattle and swine carcass prices, though, remain strong and demand steady as consumers have become accustomed to repeated disease outbreaks over the years.

General Information:

On November 29, Korea reported an outbreak of FMD in the southeastern province of Gyeongsangbuk-do to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE.) Since the initial finding, there have been several other cases in the region and new findings several hundred kilometers away have been reported in Gyeonggi-do the province surrounding Seoul, which is the heart of the nation's livestock and dairy industries. The distant outbreaks appear to be related, but how the virus is spreading over such long distances is still unknown. [Maps](#) identifying outbreak locations can be found on the OIE website.

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (MIFAFF) is culling cattle and pigs in the affected farms and animals within a 500m radius are being culled and buried as a pre-emptive measure. As of December 17, a total of 179,000 animals had been depopulated. Of that total, there were 29,000 cattle and 150,000 swine, which represent just a fraction of one percent of total livestock inventories.

Over the weekend (Dec 18-19), the local media reported that additional cases were discovered in Gyeonggi-do, bringing the total number of animals (swine + cattle) to 194,000 animals, which is the largest number of animals ever culled in the country due to FMD. Korea has battled the FMD outbreaks several times over the last decade with the first reported case in 2000, followed by another flare up in 2002, and now twice this year. MIFAFF does not think vaccination is an option at this point since it will take longer to regain disease freedom status. MIFAFF vaccinated after the outbreaks in 2002.

The outbreaks in Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeonggi-do are very disconcerting since they represent the heart of the nation's livestock industry. Gyeongsangbuk-do is home to the largest number of beef cattle, while Gyeonggi-do is the biggest producer of dairy cattle and swine. Production figures are included in a table at the end of the report.

To date, though, the latest round of outbreaks has had almost no negative impact on livestock prices. Cattle and swine carcass prices have fluctuated somewhat over the past few weeks, but are actually higher now than they were before the first outbreak reported in late November. Cattle carcass prices range from 14,200-14,800 won/kg while swine carcass prices have ranged between 4000-4,500 won/kg. A price series is included at the end of the report.

One of the main reasons prices have remained strong is consumers have become accustomed, perhaps even desensitized over the years due to repeated outbreaks of FMD and avian influenza. In addition, the government's outreach efforts to educate consumers about FMD and other diseases have kept consumers from overreacting. If the virus continues to spread, though, consumers could become nervous and cut back on eating pork and beef.

The press reported that MIFAFF is considering requiring all travelers that have been on farms, which are considered a possible transmission vector, to go through a sterilization process prior to entering the country. However, this proposal, which is currently under review by Justice

Department officials, is not likely to get any real traction since it would likely be seen as a violation of civil liberties.

2008 Livestock Numbers by Region				
	Beef	Dairy	Swine	Totals
Seoul	417	99		516
Busan	1,874	619	12,210	14,703
Daegu	16,895	3,035	23,163	43,093
Incheon	17,877	3,648	43,642	65,167
Gwangju	4,821	684	5,866	11,371
Daejeon	4,896	18	2,220	7,096
Ulsan	23,989	1,088	44,196	69,273
Gyeonggi	240,428	174,992	1,211,898	2,227,318
Gangwon	196,820	16,766	393,645	607,231
Chungbuk	163,845	22,922	515,461	702,228
Chungnam	388,312	81,711	1,983,808	2,073,831
Jeonbuk	273,802	34,278	1,364,215	1,672,395
Jeonnam	484,882	31,619	778,966	1,215,467
Gyeongbuk	486,847	41,328	1,389,488	1,617,663
Gyeongnam	258,240	28,056	1,394,580	1,681,076
Jeju	26,814	4,907	904,676	936,397
Totals	2,430,389	445,754	9,087,434	11,963,577
Source: MCFAPF				

Cattle & Swine Carcass Price Data Series¹			
	Carcass price (won/kg)		
Date	Cattle	Swine	Cases Reported (spoiled)
11/1 5/20 10	14,184	3,856	
11/1 6/20 10	13,721	3,963	
11/1 7/20 10	14,607	3,967	
11/1 8/20 10	14,178	4,047	
11/1 9/20 10	14,285	4,032	
11/20/20 10			
11/21/20 10			
11/22/20 10	14,002	3,976	
11/23/20 10	14,050	4,048	
11/24/20 10	14,958	4,021	
11/25/20 10	14,726	3,964	
11/26/20 10	14,559	3,809	
11/27/20 10			
11/28/20 10 ²			1 (swine)
11/29/20 10	14,277	3,928	2 (cattle)
11/30/20 10	13,246	3,887	
12/1/20 10	14,491	4,055	3 ~ 5 (cattle)
12/2/20 10	14,429	4,084	6 ~ 17 (cattle/swine)
12/3/20 10	14,227	4,010	18 ~ 27 (cattle/swine)
12/4/20 10			28 ~ 30 (cattle/swine)
12/5/20 10			
12/6/20 10	13,854	4,048	31 (cattle/swine)
12/7/20 10	13,308	4,311	
12/8/20 10	14,416	4,326	
12/9/20 10	14,362	4,322	
12/10/20 10	14,347	4,399	
12/11/20 10			
12/12/20 10			
12/13/20 10	14,178	4,479	
12/14/20 10	13,435	4,401	32 ~ 33 (cattle/swine)
12/15/20 10	14,467	4,517	34 (cattle)
12/16/20 10	14,551	4,352	
12/17/20 10 ³	14,872	4,166	35 (cattle)
12/18/20 10			
12/19/20 10			
12/20/20 10			

Source: MDAFF, NACF

1. The price codes for live animal is not available throughout the period covered in the above table, as the live animal market shut down due to FMD. Thus, carcass price was used to see the price change. Market is closed during the weekend so there is no price data to report during these periods.

2. First case reported in Kyonggi-do

3. First case reported in Gyeonggi-do.

