

## Rinderpest

### Cattle Plague

#### What is rinderpest and what causes it?

Rinderpest is a highly contagious viral disease of livestock. It can cause illness in cloven-hooved (two-toed) animals, particularly cattle and buffalo. It is spread by direct contact and commonly causes death in infected animals. Due to efforts of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Program, the disease is believed to be nearly eradicated. It is limited to a few areas in Africa and central Asia. The virus has not been found in North America.

#### What animals get rinderpest?

Cattle and buffalo are most commonly affected. Outbreaks in these animals can approach death rates of 100%. Sheep and goats can develop disease but usually with less serious consequences. Pigs and deer can be infected, but many times signs of disease are minimal and can go unnoticed in these species. Wild animals, such as water buffalo, yaks, giraffes, warthogs and other wild herbivores have also been affected.

#### How can my animal get rinderpest?

Rinderpest is spread between animals by **direct contact**. The virus can be in secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth, and the feces, urine, blood, milk, or reproductive fluids of infected animals. The virus may also be spread by **fomites** such as contaminated equipment, feed troughs and watering tanks. **Aerosol** transmission may occur, but usually only over very short distances.

#### How does rinderpest affect my animal?

Rinderpest infections can vary. Sick animals have a sudden onset of fever. Sores develop in the mouth, which will cause the animal to drool. Discharges from the nose and eyes will also be seen. Profuse, watery diarrhea, which may be bloody, occurs a few days after oral lesions develop. Animals may have severe abdominal pain, thirst and strain to defecate, have difficulty breathing, and progressive weakness until they can no longer stand. Death may occur suddenly or within 8-12 days; some animals may recover.

#### Can I get rinderpest?

No. Rinderpest does not infect people.

#### Who should I contact, if I suspect rinderpest?

**Contact your veterinarian immediately.** Suspicion of disease requires immediate attention.

#### How can I protect my animal from rinderpest?

Be aware of the clinical signs of the disease (sores in the mouth, sudden fever, drooling, high death rate) and the conditions resulting in the transmission of the disease (the introduction of infected animals into the herd). Any new animals entering the farm should be quarantined away from the rest of the herd until it is determined that they are healthy and there is no risk to the other animals on the farm.

The virus can be destroyed by sunlight, drying, and most disinfectants. A vaccine is available for animals in regions where the disease is present.

#### For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets. Rinderpest at <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) at <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/grep/home.html>.

United States Animal Health Association (USAHA). Foreign Animal Diseases (The Gray Book) at <http://www.usaha.org/pubs/fad.pdf>

