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Anaplasmosis

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Email: sdsu.extension@sdstate.edu

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Anaplasmosis



Cooperative Extension Service: South Dakota
State University and U. S. Department of
Agriculture

Anaplasmosis

Robert J. Bury, D.V.M., instructor in veterinary science, and
James H. Bailey, D.V.M., extension veterinarian

Anaplasmosis, a disease of mature cattle, has long been recognized as a severe problem in the southern part of the United States. However, with movements of cattle over long distances, the disease is becoming more prominent in the northern plains states.

Anaplasmosis is caused by a blood parasite, *Anaplasma marginale*. Animals with no symptoms of the disease may be carriers and serve to introduce the infection into susceptible herds of cattle. Calves generally show no signs of anaplasmosis but may be infected and become carriers of the disease. The older cattle are, the more acutely ill they become when infected with anaplasmosis.

TRANSMISSION

The source of infection is the blood of an infected animal. The most common method of transmission between animals is by insects. Blood-sucking flies, which move rapidly from animal to animal, are dangerous. The disease also may be spread by needles, dehorning tools, nose tongs, surgical instruments, etc., which have been contaminated with infected blood. The use of a single needle to vaccinate a group of cattle may spread the infection.

SYMPTOMS

The infecting organism destroys the animal's red blood cells so that anemia and paleness of the animal's skin and mucous membranes are seen. The temperature may reach 105° F. and may go up and down for a period of two weeks or more. The infected animal usually continues to eat but not as well as normal cattle. The animal may die during the acute stage or may become thin and weak and survive for a period

of time. Cows may abort their calves and affected cows and heifers may be slow to breed. The skin and mucous membranes are jaundiced. In many adult cattle the onset of symptoms is rapid, and there is high fever, anemia, jaundice and difficult breathing. Death often occurs in 24 hours or less. Affected animals often appear more excitable than usual and may attack people or objects in their path. Severely affected animals often die suddenly when they are handled or are forced to exert themselves. Older animals are more severely affected than young calves.

DIAGNOSIS

Anaplasmosis must be differentiated from a number of other diseases. It should be suspected in cattle that show anemia or yellowish-colored skin or membranes.

Consult your veterinarian immediately if this disease is suspected. A positive diagnosis depends on a series of laboratory tests. Your veterinarian is familiar with collecting appropriate specimens for laboratory diagnosis.

TREATMENT AND CONTROL

Successful treatment of anaplasmosis is difficult. Insufficient treatment, even if it saves the animal's life, can result in the animal becoming a permanent carrier of anaplasmosis and a threat to all other cattle in the area. Consult your veterinarian for specific treatment recommendations. Control depends upon reducing the insect population and eliminating the use of contaminated instruments for vaccinating, bleeding, or surgical treatments. A vaccine is available to aid in the control of this disease.

**CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN—
HE'S TRAINED TO HELP YOU PREVENT LOSSES FROM DISEASE**

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
U. S. Department of Agriculture
South Dakota State University
BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA 57006

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