

Draft newsletter article:

Protecting cattle from Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)



Pictures courtesy of J. Atkinson

If you farm cattle or buffalo you need to remain alert for a serious new disease threat that is moving rapidly into Europe.

Lumpy skin disease (LSD) is widespread through the majority of Africa – and becoming so in the Middle East –and has been spreading rapidly over the last two years. Since 2015, disease has broken out in southeast Europe, the Caucasus, Russia and Kazakhstan. Without significant control measures, it is highly likely that this serious disease will continue to spread throughout these regions.

LSD is already causing serious economic consequences for rural communities and having a significant impact on livestock trade; affected countries lose access to lucrative export markets, compounding the financial impact of any outbreak.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to protect your livestock from LSD:

- *Know the signs.* LSD is caused by a poxvirus (genus *Capripoxvirus*) and is very similar to Sheeppox virus and Goatpox virus. Cattle and buffalo affected by the disease often have highly visible lumps on the skin (see photos), but the disease also produces other clinical signs such as fever, listlessness, internal lesions, reluctance to eat, ocular/nasal discharge, dramatic milk drop and weight loss.

Up to 10% of infected animals may die. As some of these signs are similar to those produced by other diseases it is important to be vigilant and seek veterinary advice if you spot anything suspicious.

- *Alert the authorities.* If you see any possible signs of LSD in your cattle or buffalo it is important to alert your veterinarian or the authorities to prevent the disease from spreading.
- *Prevent the disease from spreading.* Insect vectors, including mosquitoes, spread the disease between animals. As vector control is difficult, the most effective way of preventing spread is by widespread vaccination of the livestock population at risk.
- *Vaccinate your animals.* There is no specific treatment available for animals that become infected and develop LSD because it is caused by a virus. This means that it is essential to prevent animals from becoming infected. Control and prevention of LSD relies on four tactics: movement control (quarantine), vaccination, slaughter campaigns and management strategies. Vaccination (with a vaccine containing a 'Neethling-like' strain) is the most effective means of control. High coverage vaccination programmes are important to protect animals and help prevent the spread of disease.

For more information, call [NUMBER] or visit [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

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