

Vesicular Stomatitis in Livestock

Spring 2010

Navajo Nation Veterinary and Livestock Program



What is Vesicular Stomatitis?

Vesicular Stomatitis is a viral disease that primarily affects horses, swine and cattle. This disease may occasionally affect sheep and goats. Humans can also become infected with VS when handling affected livestock. This disease is not new to the Navajo Nation, in 1997, vesicular stomatitis was found in neighboring states. Last year the disease was found in New Mexico and Texas. This year this disease was found on May 27, 2010 in Cochise County in Arizona.

How is it spread?

Grasshopper saliva spreads this disease, infected grazing areas and the movement of the infected grasshoppers are most likely responsible. Once the disease is in a herd, it will spread from animal to animal by direct contact or exposure to saliva or fluid from ruptured lesions.

Signs and symptoms of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) infection may include:

One of the first signs usually is excessive salivation. Livestock will have a fever prior to the appearance of lesions. Vesicular Stomatitis causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves and teats. These blisters swell and break, leaving the raw tissue exposed. Livestock will have weight loss and production losses.

- ❖ Horses – Usually have lesions on the upper surface of the tongue
- ❖ Cattle – Lesions appear on the hard palate, lips, and gums sometimes extending to the muzzle and nose.
- ❖ Swine – Show signs of lameness caused by foot lesions

There is no treatment for this disease. The lesions are very painful; livestock will not eat or drink. It is a reported regulatory disease.

To reduce the risk of Vesicular Stomatitis:

The Navajo Veterinary & Livestock Program would like to prevent the likelihood of this disease coming onto the Navajo Nation. Protect your livestock from this disease by avoid areas where VS has been diagnosed. Pen up any new livestock for two weeks prior to entrance into the herd – Make sure they are healthy, first. Health certificates may soon require a VS statement, “these livestock are free of VS and do not originate from a VS premise.” Communicate with your veterinarian on the length of time for a valid health certificate, note this may change depending the state during your travel.

People with vesicular stomatitis will have flu-like symptoms: fever, muscle aches, headache and malaise. Seek medical attention.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS CASES

- ❖ REPORT THE LOCATION TO THE RESOURCE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT (928) 871-6701
- ❖ ALL CASES HAVE TO BE INVESTIGATED, REPORT SUSPICIOUS CASES TO THE NAVAJO VETERINARY & LIVESTOCK PROGRAM (928) 871-6615
- ❖ NNVLP AGENCY CLINICS: CHINLE – (928) 674-2069, SHIPROCK (505) 368-1007 AND WINDOW ROCK (928) 871-6615