

Lumpy Skin Disease

What is lumpy skin disease and what causes it?

Lumpy skin disease is a viral disease of cattle that is spread by biting insects. The virus, which is closely related to the pox viruses of sheep and goats, and causes nodular skin lesions on the animal's body.

Lumpy skin disease generally occurs in Africa; however outbreaks have occurred in parts of the Middle East. The disease has not occurred in North America.

What animals get lumpy skin disease?

Lumpy skin disease is a disease of cattle, including zebus. A few cases have been reported in Asian water buffalo.

How can my animal get lumpy skin disease?

Lumpy skin disease is primarily spread between animals by biting insects (**vector**), such as mosquitoes and biting flies. Less commonly, the virus may be spread by **direct contact** to the skin lesions, saliva, nasal discharge, milk, or semen of infected animals.

How does lumpy skin disease affect my animal?

Disease can vary from mild to severe; younger animals are generally more severely affected. Animals will have a fever, be lethargic and unwilling to eat. Animals may have discharge from the eyes and nose, drop in milk production and weight loss.

The most apparent sign will be multiple nodules on the body, including the muzzle, nostrils, head, neck, back, legs, scrotum, perineum, udder, eyelids, nasal and oral mucosa,

and tail. These nodules may leak fluid and have an ulcerated center. Nodules can also develop in gastrointestinal tract, especially the abomasum (true stomach), as well as the trachea and lungs, resulting in primary and secondary pneumonia. Lameness may occur from inflammation of the tendons, and severe swelling of the brisket and legs. This lameness can be permanent with severe damage to tendons and joints from secondary bacterial infections. Permanent damage may occur to teats and mammary glands due to secondary bacterial infections and mastitis. Abortion and intrauterine infection are possible; temporary or permanent sterility in both bulls and cows may occur.

Can I get lumpy skin disease?

No. Humans are not at risk of developing lumpy skin disease.

Who should I contact, if I suspect lumpy skin disease?

Contact your veterinarian immediately. Lumpy skin disease is not currently found in the U.S.; suspicion of disease requires immediate attention.

How can I protect my animals from lumpy skin disease?

Monitor your animals frequently for any signs of disease, especially skin lesions or lameness. Isolate new introductions or returning animals for several weeks before placing them with the rest of the herd. Minimize exposure of your animals to insects such as mosquitoes or biting flies. Implement vector control measures on your farm.

For More Information

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

Lumpy Skin Disease
is a disease of cattle that
results in nodular lesions.
It is spread by biting
insects.



Photo: Nodules in cattle skin. From USDA Plum Island Animal Disease Center.