



Frequently asked questions on reportable animal diseases for organic/alternative livestock producers

WHAT IS A REPORTABLE ANIMAL DISEASE (RD)?

RDs are serious diseases in the US that can spread within your herd or flock. They can also spread to nearby farms, your community, and beyond. RDs are also sometimes called notifiable diseases. Reportable diseases are required by law to be reported to government officials. Reportable diseases affect livestock or poultry, some affect companion animals, and some may affect people.

- Examples of RDs in the US include anthrax, virulent Newcastle disease (VND), West Nile virus, Q Fever, and tularemia.
- Each State has its own RD list. Search “[your state] reportable animal disease list” to find your State’s RD list.
- Some RDs have USDA programs that work with producers to help control them. Reportable program diseases include Aujeszky’s disease (pseudorabies), bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis (caused by *Brucella abortus* and *Brucella suis*), Chronic wasting disease (CWD), equine infectious anemia (EIA), equine viral arteritis (EVA), and scrapie.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REPORTABLE ANIMAL DISEASE AND A FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE (FAD)?

A foreign animal disease is a reportable disease not usually found in the United States. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) keep a list of FADs that could be brought into the US.

- Some examples of foreign animal diseases include foot and mouth Disease (FMD), african swine Fever (ASF), classical swine Fever (CSF) and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

HOW MIGHT A FAD AFFECT MY FARM OR RANCH?

In addition to the very serious consequences to your livestock, a FAD outbreak in the US would have very serious economic impacts. A FAD in the US would restrict the movement of livestock and disrupt interstate and international trade. If your animals become infected with a RD or FAD, they may be required to be euthanized. This makes your farm’s disease prevention program very important.

WHAT WOULD AN RD OR FAD LOOK LIKE IN MY HERD OR FLOCK?

Some RDs and FADs can look like a lot of other common diseases. Others might not fit the usual picture of disease. You might see:

- A sudden increase in sickness or death
- Blisters on the mouth, hooves, or teats
- A sudden increase in abortions
- Nervous system signs (difficulty walking, circling, stargazing)
- Animals that don’t respond to treatments as expected
- Severe breathing problems
- Unusual external parasites or maggots feeding on flesh
- Poor or no response to treatment
- Some RDs and FADs only affect one species (e.g. scrapie, african swine fever). Some RDs and FADs can infect more than one species (e.g., rabies, anthrax, foot and mouth disease).

WHAT IF I SUSPECT AN RD OR FAD?

- If you are suspicious of an RD or FAD, contact your veterinarian or State Animal Health Official (SAHO) immediately. usaha.org/saho

WHEN SHOULD I REPORT A SUSPICIOUS CASE?

- Immediately! Don't wait for more animals to get sick or a positive test result. A fast response can be the difference between a disease being quickly controlled or spreading throughout the country.

CAN PEOPLE GET RDS OR FADS?

- Each state has its list of reportable diseases for people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also has a list of diseases that must be reported. Some RDs and FADs can affect both animals and humans. These are called zoonotic diseases. RDs and FADs that can spread between humans and animals include rabies, brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, and Rift Valley fever, and some strains of avian influenza.

CAN I GET A REPORTABLE ZONOTIC DISEASE FROM MY ANIMALS?

- It is possible to get a zoonotic disease from your livestock or companion animals.
- Some of the current zoonotic diseases of most concern in the US are zoonotic influenza, salmonellosis, West Nile virus, plague, emerging coronaviruses (SARS or MERS), rabies, brucellosis, and Lyme disease.

AS AN ORGANIC OR ALTERNATIVE LIVESTOCK PRODUCER, SHOULD I HAVE ANY UNIQUE CONCERNS ABOUT RDS AND FADS?

- Organic producers and some alternative producers do not use antibiotics for their livestock or poultry. When disease does strike, treatment options are limited. The stronger your disease prevention program, the safer your farm or ranch will be from disease entering. This is true for common diseases, zoonotic diseases, RDs, and FADs.
- Some reportable diseases have vaccines for certain species (e.g., Rabies, anthrax, West Nile Virus, and Marek's disease). Some (but not all) FADs have vaccines as well that are only used during an outbreak. Some organic and alternative producers do not vaccinate their livestock. Unvaccinated animals will be more vulnerable to disease and suffer more severe illnesses than vaccinated animals. For this reason, a strong disease prevention program is essential.

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR ORGANIC AND ALTERNATIVE PRODUCERS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING A FAD OUTBREAK IN THE US

- Livestock and poultry producers are responsible for preventing their animals from becoming infected and preventing infection from spreading to other farms if they become infected.
- Producers can request permission not to have their animals vaccinated from the state or federal authorities in charge of the outbreak response. There isn't a simple answer to what happens if a producer of any size doesn't want to vaccinate their livestock or poultry. It will depend upon the disease, the species affected, the duration of the outbreak, and the geographical scope of the outbreak.
- Any livestock producer who refuses to have their animal vaccinated during a FAD outbreak could lose the ability to collect indemnity for euthanized animals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- [List of State Animal Health Officials](#)
- [National list of human reportable diseases](#)
- [USDA list of reportable and foreign animal diseases](#)
- [USDA-Preparing for a FAD](#)
- [Zoonotic diseases of most concern in the US](#)