

Canadian Food Inspection Agency Animal Products  
Animal Health and Production Division

### **Vesicular Stomatitis**

#### **What is it?**

Vesicular stomatitis (VS) is a viral disease affecting horses, ruminants such as cattle, sheep and members of the deer and llama families, and swine. While VS causes discomfort to affected animals, and may result in loss of markets for live animals, meat and animal genetics, it is most significant because it closely resembles foot and mouth disease (FMD). Foot and mouth disease affects ruminants and swine, and is a devastating disease for producers.

#### **How is it transmitted?**

Animals are infected with the virus by eating or coming into contact with substances contaminated with saliva or fluid from the lesions of infected animals. Spread in dairy herds may also occur as a result of milking procedures. In some regions insects play a significant role in the spread of the disease.

The disease may also be transmitted to humans who come into contact with infected animals. It causes influenza-like symptoms.

#### **What are the signs of VS?**

Vesicular stomatitis causes a mild fever, and the formation of blister-like lesions on the inside of the mouth, and on the lips, nose, hooves and udder. The blisters break, leaving raw, sore areas. Affected animals often salivate profusely, and are unwilling to eat or drink. Some animals, particularly swine, may become lame. Milking cows show a marked decrease in milk production. The incubation period (the time between infection with the virus and clinical signs) may range from two to eight days, and animals generally recover completely in three to four days.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

Vesicular stomatitis is diagnosed by laboratory testing on samples of fluid from the vesicles of

affected animals, or by testing a blood sample taken from the animal.

### **What should I do if I think my animal might have VS?**

- Call your veterinarian immediately, or call the nearest office of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which is listed in the government blue pages of your phone book.
- All animals with lesions should be kept separate from healthy animals, preferably indoors. Do NOT move animals from your premises until a definitive diagnosis has been made.
- Wear protective clothing when handling suspect animals to help prevent exposure to the virus.

### **Do we have vesicular stomatitis in Canada?**

Vesicular stomatitis was last diagnosed in Canada in 1949.

### **What does the Canadian Food Inspection Agency do to prevent vesicular stomatitis from entering Canada?**

The CFIA has taken the following measures to prevent the entry of this disease into Canada:

- VS is a reportable disease under the Animal Health Act. This means that all suspected cases must be reported to the CFIA.
- All reported suspect cases are immediately investigated by inspectors from the agency.
- Should VS be diagnosed on a Canadian premises, a quarantine would be imposed to restrict movement of the animals. This quarantine would be lifted 30 days after all clinical signs have disappeared.
- When there is a VS outbreak in another country, the CFIA may require that all susceptible animals entering Canada from that country be examined by a federal veterinarian. The veterinary authorities of the exporting country are required to provide certification that the animal was found clinically healthy prior to departure and did not originate from an area where the disease is active.

### **How to get more information?**

Contact your Canadian Food Inspection Agency Area Office:

Atlantic Area: (506) 851-7400

Quebec Area: (514) 283-8888

Ontario Area: (519) 837-9400

Western Area: (403) 292-4301

You can find your local Canadian Food Inspection Agency District Office on the CFIA Web site

or by consulting the blue pages of your local phone directory.

CLICK BELOW TO READ THE PRESS RELEASE ABOUT BORDER RESTRICTIONS  
[CFIA NOTICE TO INDUSTRY - VESICULAR STOMATITIS](#)