

Cattle Infections Spread by Ticks

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There are 3 major diseases transmitted by ticks that affect cattle. This factsheet briefly describes each disease and what you can do to treat it and prevent it.

ANAPLASMA:

- **Effects:**
Animals are pale, not eating, and a decrease in their milk production is seen. They breathe fast, and are weak when they walk. They also have an increased temperature and pale gums. The main effect that is different from other diseases causing pale gums is that they may have hard feces and dark yellow urine.
- **Treatment:**
Early treatment is the important. When effects are seen you should call your veterinarian. Treatment includes an antibiotic, such as tetracycline, an anti-inflammatory, such as dexamethasone, and a blood-builder, such as hemo 15.
- **Prevention:**
This disease is spread mainly by ticks but can also be spread from infected cattle to uninfected cattle by blood-contaminated equipment, and occasionally by flies and mosquitoes. Tick control is also essential for prevention (see below under East Coast Fever). Equipment with blood contamination, such as dehorner, should be cleaned well before use on another animal. Flies can be controlled through manure management, muscovy ducks, and fly sprays, while mosquitoes can be controlled through standing water management (fish) and mosquitoes sprays.

BABESIA:

- **Effects:**
Animals with this infection have a high fever and their gums/eyes can look pale or yellow. They are weak, not eating and cows have less milk production. They have a high heart rate, and can have difficulty breathing. The main effect that is different from other diseases causing pale gums is that the urine is red.
- **Treatment:**
Early diagnosis is the key. Once effects are observed your veterinarian should be called. Treatment includes an antibiotic such as imidocarb (1-3 mg/kg).
- **Prevention:**
This disease is also transmitted by ticks. Tick control is essential (see above).



EAST COAST FEVER (ECF)

- **Effects:**
Animals are pale, not eating and cows have a decrease in milk production. They have a fever and can have diarrhea or trouble breathing. If left untreated, they will lose weight, be unable to get up, and will die. The main effect that is different from other diseases causing pale gums is that they have excess tearing, large lumps in front of their shoulders and knees, and red hemorrhage lines under their tongue.
- **Treatment:**
Successful treatment depends on early diagnosis. When effects are seen, your veterinarian should be called immediately. Treatment includes an antibiotic, such as buparvaquone, an anti-inflammatory, such as dexamethasone, an antihistamine, such as ephedrine, and a blood-builder, such as hemo 15.
- **Prevention:**
This disease is spread by the brown ear tick. Tick control is essential for prevention. Spray or dip the whole animal with a tick-killing product, such as permethrin, every 7 days during the rainy season (10 days during the dry season) and cut grass 1 day before it is fed so the ticks crawl off of the grass.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact the following WSHGD animal health personnel:

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