

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

#944
~~Ag 84~~ ~~pro~~ ~~Ag 84~~ ~~pro~~ ~~Ag 84~~ ~~pro~~
Ag 84 pro
Reprinted
Supersedes
Date received ~~6/29/70~~ PA-944
~~81-273-007~~

...a highly contagious virus disease of cattle

RINDERPEST
RINDERPEST
RINDERPEST



Rinderpest, or cattle plague, is a highly infectious disease that causes inflammation of the mucous membranes of the digestive tract of cattle and buffalo. Sheep, goats, swine, and some wild game animals are also susceptible.

It is one of the world's oldest and most fatal diseases, has been a plague to the bovine populations of Africa and Asia for centuries, and is an important disease of cattle in these areas today.

United States cattle are highly susceptible to this foreign disease. An outbreak of rinderpest in the United States could cause serious livestock losses if not quickly detected and eradicated. Economic losses from an uncontrolled outbreak could be extremely heavy.

Rinderpest has not been reported to affect humans.

RINDERPEST

..... a highly
contagious
virus disease
of cattle

WHERE IT OCCURS. Rinderpest is widespread in parts of Asia and Africa; these entire continents are a potential source of the disease to the United States. Periodically, it has swept across Eastern and Western Europe. The disease has been known in the Middle East since Biblical times.

During the eighteenth century the disease was prevalent in Europe when herds of cattle were brought from eastern Europe and Asia to supply demands of the armies during military campaigns. It prevailed in Europe during the Franco-Prussian War.

Only once has rinderpest occurred in the Western Hemisphere. In 1921, Brazil had an outbreak which was successfully eradicated through a quarantine and slaughter program.

Australia reported the disease in 1923, eradicated it, and has remained free of the disease since that time.

HOW IT SPREADS. Rinderpest spreads rapidly from infected to healthy animals through both direct and indirect contact. All body secretions and discharges of infected animals can contain the virus.

Animals with rinderpest become dehydrated and emaciated with a severe, sometimes bloody diarrhea.



The ingestion of virus-contaminated feed or water may transmit the disease, but the chances of infection are much greater by way of the respiratory tract from the inhalation of virus-laden aerosols from infected animals.

Although rinderpest is usually spread by the movement of infected animals, it is possible for the disease to be introduced into the United States through infected hides, wool, and feed. Persons may also carry the virus on their shoes, clothing, or implements.

The disease is highly contagious. When introduced into a susceptible herd, all of the animals may become infected, and over 90 percent may die.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR. Susceptible animals may show signs of rinderpest 3 to 9 days after they are exposed. An infected animal first undergoes an abrupt rise in temperature, which may reach 104° to 108° F. The animal becomes weak, and in dairy animals milk production diminishes rapidly.

Infected animals usually develop several of the following signs:

- Depression.
- Loss of appetite.

Eroded areas on mouth and gums of cow.



- Discharges from nose and mouth.
- Erosions of the mouth and gums.
- Excessive thirst.
- Bloody diarrhea.
- Mucous shreds in body waste, which are black or bloodstained.
- Rapid loss of weight.
- Coughing and difficult breathing.
- Rough and soiled hair coat.

In severe cases, death usually comes 5 to 10 days after the disease first appears.

CONFUSION WITH OTHER DISEASES. Rinderpest may be confused with several diseases that occur in the United States.

The signs of rinderpest may be similar to those of mucosal disease, virus diarrhea, and rhinotracheitis. Animals with these diseases may also develop diarrhea, erosions in the mouth, and loss of weight.

The clinical similarity between rinderpest and virus diarrhea, mucosal disease, and rhinotracheitis requires veterinarians in rinderpest-free countries to be especially alert for signs of the disease. They should seek assistance from diagnostic specialists when a diagnosis of rinderpest can not be otherwise eliminated.

Severe redness in the mucosal folds of the abomasum (4th stomach).



HOW TO GET A DIAGNOSIS. An early diagnosis is dependent upon prompt reporting of suspicious animals. Delay in the diagnosis of rinderpest would be costly to countries such as the United States with previously unexposed cattle. If you suspect rinderpest in your herd, notify your veterinarian or State or Federal animal-disease control officials at once.

A qualified and experienced diagnostic specialist will be sent to observe your herd and assist in making the diagnosis.

Laboratory tests and animal inoculations may be necessary to make a diagnosis.

HOW TO ERADICATE. If an outbreak of rinderpest occurs, a cooperative State-Federal eradication program will be set up immediately. The

Congestive and necrotic lymphatic glands in small intestines.



Dense pinpoint hemorrhages in the lining of the small intestines.



following disease-fighting measures will be used:

- Immediate slaughter and burial of all infected animals.
- Quarantines.
- Restrictions on the movement of all cattle in the affected and adjacent areas.
- Adequate disinfection of premises and equipment.

HOW WE PROTECT ANIMALS. Many precautions are taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to prevent the introduction of foreign animal diseases—including rinderpest—into this country.

Our laws prohibit the importation of cattle from countries with rinderpest. Other preventive measures include the inspection of all imported livestock at U.S. ports of entry, as well as an official health certificate and appropriate tests and quarantines when required.

Streaks of hemorrhages in the crest of the folds of the rectal mucosa.



HOW CAN YOU HELP. Livestock workers and owners share a responsibility with disease-control officials in maintaining an alert for foreign animal diseases.

In case of a rinderpest outbreak in the United States, you can help reduce losses if you—

- Know the signs of rinderpest.
- Observe your cattle regularly. Look for changes in appearance, appetite, and behavior that indicate disease.
- Call your veterinarian immediately if you suspect rinderpest or if you observe signs of a similar disease.
- Isolate suspect animals and do not move animals off your farm or ranch without approval from disease-control officials.
- Cooperate with animal disease control officials and your neighbors in the eradication effort.

This is one of a series of publications designed to acquaint American livestock men with foreign animal diseases and the steps to take if an outbreak is suspected.

If you want more information about foreign animal diseases, get in touch with your local veterinarian, your county agricultural agent, or State or Federal animal-disease control officials.



Prepared by
Animal Health Division and
Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division
Agricultural Research Service

Washington, D.C.

Issued July 1970