



FROM

Hide TO *Herd*

Why LSD Prevention Matters

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Introduction

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) is a viral threat to cattle, causing painful skin nodules that not only damage hides but can leave lasting scars on your herd—and your livelihood. For every cattle owner, especially stud breeders, understanding the risks and how to control this disease is essential to protecting both animals and profits.

What is LSD?

LSD is an infectious viral disease of cattle. It is mainly transmitted by biting insects, such as mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks. This means that biting pests carry live viruses from one animal and 'inject' them into another animal. LSD virus (LSDV) may also spread by other less common routes like saliva in shared water troughs or mechanically with multi-use needles (especially

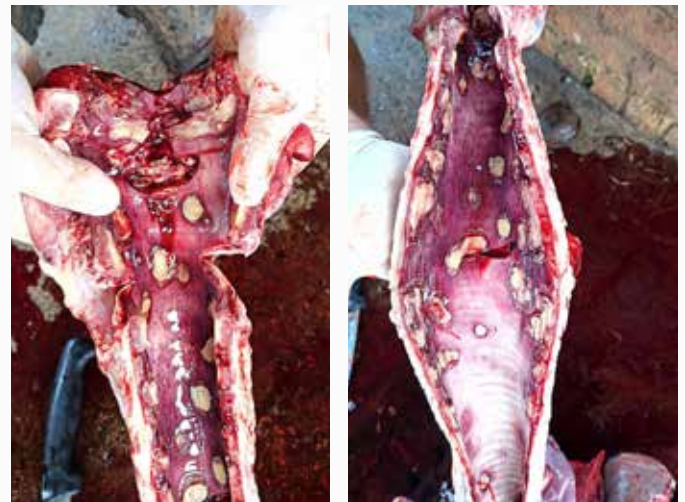
during outbreak situations). LSDV is widespread across South Africa's cattle-farming regions. Outbreaks typically peak in late summer and autumn following good rains, although cases can occur year-round. This is due to the abundance of pests that transmit LSDV after good rains. It is also a State notifiable disease, and all suspicious or confirmed cases need to be reported to the local State Veterinarian. Fortunately, there are no quarantine measures as for foot-and-mouth-disease, but reporting helps to monitor the disease occurrence and spread and informs cattle farmers of its presence.

Clinical signs

Clinical signs of LSD are typically fever followed by enlarged lymph nodes and the development of numerous, firm, round skin nodules that appear four to ten days after the initial fever. The skin nodules may also affect the underlying muscle and tendons and even extend into the mouth, respiratory tract, udder and reproductive organs. These skin nodules tend to mature into persistent lumps ("sitfasts") or fall out leaving deep open skin wounds, both of which cause permanent hide damage. The most vulnerable animals are cows in peak lactation and young animals as they tend to develop the most severe clinical signs. European cattle breeds also tend to develop worse clinical signs compared to local breeds. Typical LSD outbreaks may affect up to half the herd, and while less common, mortalities and abortions may also occur. Pseudo-lumpy skin disease, caused by bovid herpesvirus 2 (BHV-2), may be confused for LSD. However, disease from BHV-2 is much milder and typically only affects the superficial layers of the skin without permanently damaging the hide.

Prevention and control

The idiom, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound in cure" rings especially true for LSD. Treatment of LSD is supportive, as with most viral diseases, and includes vitamin and mineral supplementation along with anti-inflammatories. Antibiotics may be needed to treat or prevent secondary bacterial infection of open wounds along with concurrent typical wound management practices. The most reliable control method for LSD is proactive vaccination followed by effective vector control. There are a couple of highly effective commercial vaccines available



for building herd immunity. These vaccines need to be given to cattle yearly from the age of six months onward. Controlling the vectors (carriers of the virus) is not quite as easy or effective as a robust vaccination programme. However, it forms part of a critical control point in any outbreak situation. There are various options with residual activity available for use on the animal (e.g.,

Afrivet Redline Pour-on or Delta Force 100) or in the environment (e.g., Icon 10 CS). By effectively controlling these pests, you also help prevent other vector-borne diseases such as three-day stiffness, bluetongue, Rift valley fever, sweating sickness, heartwater and redwater.

Why should farmers care?

Saying that LSD is of major economic importance is stating the obvious when considering the clinical signs and cost of treatment mentioned above. However, in severe cases some complications are not immediately apparent, such as permanent drop in milk production in cows and infertility in bulls. Imagine the consequences if your top milk-producing cows are outperformed by low producers destined for culling—truly devastating! Or picture your prized bull suddenly unable to

pass on his genetics – catastrophic! In addition, the fever caused by LSDV can lead to a temporary reduction in fertility in bulls, lasting up to two months.

Conclusion

Do not wait until the fat is in the fire – proactive prevention is critical to avoid severe economic losses from an LSD outbreak. Contact your local veterinarian today and invest in a farm-specific, comprehensive disease control programme to protect your herd and your financial sustainability.



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