



BLUETONGUE VIRUS

Bluetongue or BTV in Sheep and Goats

Bluetongue is an infectious viral disease transmitted through insect bites, primarily affecting ruminant species, notably sheep. The disease manifests in various symptoms such as ulcers, sores, hoof pain, lameness, and reproductive issues. Affected animals may experience tongue swelling, leading to breathing complications, which is why it is named "bluetongue." This disease is prevalent globally, and in the United States, it is primarily observed in the southern and western states. BTV does not affect humans.

CAUSES OF BLUETONGUE

The transmission of Bluetongue virus occurs through biting midges, known as *Culicoides* spp., which serve as vectors. Although other biting insects like ticks or sheep keds may also carry the virus, it is important to note that Bluetongue is not contagious and does not spread through direct animal-to-animal contact. However, the virus can be transmitted through contaminated objects (fomites), such as surgical equipment and needles. Additionally, the virus can be passed from the dam to the fetus during pregnancy. While Bluetongue virus can be present in semen, it is not considered a significant route of infection.

PREVENTION OF BLUETONGUE

To mitigate the spread of bluetongue disease through vectors, it is crucial to implement insect control and prevention measures. These strategies may involve eliminating insect habitats, utilizing insecticides, or relocating animals to barns during peak vector activity (typically dusk until dawn). It is important to note that any needles and surgical equipment used with animals suspected of having bluetongue should be treated as contaminated and disposed of correctly.

Vaccines are available for animals at high risk of contracting bluetongue. However, it is important to acknowledge that these vaccines are not risk-free and should be administered with careful consideration and professional guidance.



***This is a
notifiable disease***

Sources

Bluetongue fast fact - CFSPH. (n.d.). https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/FastFacts/pdfs/bluetongue_F.pdf

SYMPTOMS OF BLUETONGUE

Common symptoms of Bluetongue can include:

- **Tongue and mouth issues:** Swelling, ulceration, and cyanosis (blue discoloration). The tongue may become swollen and stiff, making it difficult for the animal to eat or drink.
- **Lameness and joint swelling:** Infected animals may experience lameness due to inflammation and swelling in the joints. Unusual/exaggerated gait
- **Fever and lethargy:** Bluetongue can cause fever, accompanied by general weakness and lethargy.
- **Respiratory distress:** In severe cases, bluetongue can affect the respiratory system, leading to breathing difficulties.

TREATMENT OF BLUETONGUE

Currently, there is no specific curative treatment for animals infected with Bluetongue virus (BTV). The management of bluetongue primarily focuses on supportive care and preventing secondary complications. Here are some general treatment and management strategies: Hydration and nutrition, Vector control, Quarantine and isolation, and Vaccination. Consult a vet for further information.

Factsheet provided by:

**The Idaho Sheep & Goat
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