

RABIES MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

Prevention and Control

Consideration should be given to vaccinating livestock that are particularly valuable. Animals for which there is a licensed rabies vaccine (horses, cattle and sheep), that have frequent contact with humans (e.g. petting zoos, fairs, riding stables, shows, exhibitions, etc.) should be currently vaccinated against rabies.

Livestock from which raw (un-pasteurized) milk or milk products are produced for direct human consumption should be currently vaccinated against rabies.*

*(CDC . *Mass Treatment of Humans Who Drank Unpasteurized Milk from Rabid Cows – Massachusetts, 1996-1998.* MMWR 1999;48(11):228-229.)

Postexposure Management

- All livestock rabies exposures must be reported to the State Veterinarian. The degree of confinement will be related to the likelihood of rabies in the animal.
- Livestock exhibiting signs of abnormal behavior should be suspected of rabies. Under no circumstances should anyone place their hands in the oral cavity of such animal.
- All species of livestock are susceptible to rabies.

A. CURRENTLY VACCINATED

Horses, cattle, and sheep vaccinated with an approved vaccine should be revaccinated immediately and placed under Type A confinement by the owner for a period of 45 days. Use only vaccines approved for use in livestock. (See current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control in Appendix X)

Type A Confinement:

- Animal is kept under confinement to prevent escape.
- Animal is not to be sold or relocated without permission of the State Veterinarian.

B. NOT CURRENTLY VACCINATED

Livestock bitten by a rabid animal should be destroyed (slaughtered) immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have this done, the animal should be kept under Type B confinement for six months at the discretion of the State Veterinarian.

Type B Confinement:

- Animal is kept in a secure stall or pen separate from other animals and humans.
- Human contact with the animal is kept to a minimum.
- Owner is not allowed to remove animal from premises except with permission of the State veterinarian.

C. HANDLING AND CONSUMPTION OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Handling and consumption of tissues from exposed animals may carry a risk of rabies transmission. Risk factors depend in part on the site(s) of exposure, amount of virus present, severity of wounds, and whether sufficient contaminated tissue has been excised. If an exposed animal is to be slaughtered for consumption, it should be done immediately after exposure and all tissues should be cooked thoroughly. Persons handling exposed animals, carcasses and tissues should use barrier precautions. Historically, federal guidelines for federal meat inspectors required that any animal known to have been exposed to rabies within 8 months be rejected for slaughter. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) meat inspectors should be notified if such exposures occur in food animals prior to slaughter.**

Rabies virus may be widely distributed in tissues of infected animals. Tissues and products from a rabid animal should not be used for human or animal consumption. Pasteurization temperatures will inactivate rabies virus; therefore, drinking pasteurized milk or eating thoroughly cooked animal products does not constitute a rabies exposure.**

**(*Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, 2008*, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians)