

**NEW MEXICO LIVESTOCK BOARD
Office of the State Veterinarian
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**Vesicular Stomatitis
Recommendations to Owners
6/18/12**

Vesicular stomatitis (VS), a viral disease of livestock, was initially found in the outskirts of Tularosa, NM in Otero County in April 2012. No further cases were confirmed in that county, but the disease subsequently was found in Valencia County south of Albuquerque, where a total of nine premises are currently under quarantine for suspected or confirmed cases of VS. In the last week there have been suspected VS cases reported and quarantined in southwestern San Miguel and northern Socorro Counties. Because the disease has a tendency to appear along the path of waterways such as rivers and streams, we consider the counties along the Rio Grande to have elevated risk of the development of positive cases, based on the historical patterns of disease movement in prior year outbreaks.

Vesicular stomatitis can affect horses, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. VS causes vesicular or blister-like lesions in the mouth and on the tongue of livestock. These initial lesions progress rapidly to ulcerative lesions and sloughing of the mucous membrane surface. The lesions are painful and the affected animals usually show signs of drooling and decreased appetite. The virus can also cause inflammation and ulcerative lesions on the coronary bands of the hooves and lead to lameness. The virus circulating in New Mexico this year appears to be quite virulent and lesions in most of the affected animals have been extensive and severe.

The disease is spread by many types of biting insects. Virus is shed heavily by infected animals so the disease can be spread by water and feed buckets, bits and other tack and other objects on which an infected animal can deposit virus. Once cases appear VS generally remains active until hard freezes occur in the late fall or winter. Based upon these points there are some important precautions that you as a livestock owner can take to help prevent exposure of your livestock AND spread of the virus:

- Use insect repellent products (sprays, ear tags etc.), fly sheets and other measures to keep biting insects off your stock.
- Take steps to control or eliminate sites where biting insects such as flies or mosquitoes might multiply.
- Check your animals daily for signs and lesions suggesting the presence of VS, and report any suspicious lesions to your veterinarian or to the State Veterinarian's Office immediately.
- Avoid travel to areas of the State where active cases are documented or to areas considered higher risk for the emergence of cases.

The course of this current VS outbreak in New Mexico will be unpredictable, and the restrictions and recommendations issued by this office can and will change as needed. The goal is to minimize the potential spread of the disease within our State's borders, particularly through commingling at organized events, or spreading to other states. We appreciate your efforts to be diligent in monitoring your livestock and to make prudent choices regarding the movement of your livestock in light of the VS outbreak we are experiencing.