

News Column

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ANAPLASMOSIS

If the fall of 2015 is an indication of things to come, anaplasmosis will continue to become more prevalent in Kansas in coming years. Anaplasmosis cases were reported to be at record levels in Kansas last fall, with cases diagnosed across the state and not just in southeast Kansas where it has been common for many years.

So, what are the symptoms of anaplasmosis? It depends on the age of the animal. The older they are, the greater the likelihood that death will be a symptom. Disease symptoms are generally mild in cattle under one year of age. Anaplasmosis is sometimes fatal in cattle one to three years of age, and often fatal in older cattle.

Anaplasmosis is a vector-borne disease that causes destruction of red blood cells in cattle and other ruminants. It is often transmitted by ticks, either male dog ticks or wood ticks.

Affected animals become anemic as the spleen tries to purge the affected red blood cells. Open-mouth breathing and staggering are common symptoms. Fever, weight loss, abortion, and death are also common. Affected cattle either die or begin recovering within four days after the first signs of the disease. However, affected animals that survive will become carriers for life.

While ticks are a common carrier of anaplasmosis, they are not the only way the disease can be spread. Anything that transfers blood between animals can be a source of infection, including stable flies, horse flies, deer flies, and mosquitoes. Needles, tattoo pliers, and dehorning instruments can also transmit the disease.

Treatment for anaplasmosis generally involves either an oxytetracycline injection or chlortetracycline in the feed. Producers who have previously used chlortetracycline in mineral to treat cows will need a Veterinary Feed Directive written order to purchase the product, beginning January 1, 2017.

While anaplasmosis had for many years been considered a more tropical or coastal diseases, the number of cases in northern Kansas, including Riley county, indicates that it is a problem for us now too. We need to learn to recognize the symptoms, and we need to understand appropriate treatment protocols.

A meeting designed to bring both producers and veterinarians up to speed on anaplasmosis diagnosis and treatment, will be held on May 11, 2016 at the College Conference Center at the Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus in Salina. The meeting has been dubbed the Kansas State University Anaplasmosis Symposium.

Since there is an 11:30 a.m. start time for this meeting, I made a call to one of the organizers to ask about lunch and a registration fee. The answer to my question was, “they are not on the flyer because neither apply.” Translated, that means there is no registration fee and there will be no lunch provided. Eat before you arrive.

Reservations to attend the Anaplasmosis Symposium are requested by May 6 and may be made by contacting Anthony Ruiz at the Central Kansas Extension District Office. Either call Anthony by dialing 785/392-2147, or send e-mail to anruiz@ksu.edu.

If you have questions you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmcclure@ksu.edu.

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