

Beef Cattle Anaplasmosis

Anaplasmosis is a vector borne infectious disease of cattle, sheep, goats and other wild ruminants. The severity of anaplasmosis depends on the species involved and the age of the animal. Young calves seem to have resistance to the disease while the acute form generally occurs in animals from one to three years in age. Cattle over three years of age suffer the most severe form, where sudden onset and death predominates. Animals surviving anaplasmosis can become carriers for the disease and act as a reservoir of infection for susceptible animals in the herd. Economic losses from anaplasmosis include abortions, death, gain losses, decreased milk production, bull fertility and treatment expense.

Anaplasmosis can be transmitted by several methods but it is not contagious. A transfer of blood from an infected animal to a susceptible animal must occur. Ticks, horse and stable flies are vectors that can transmit the disease. The disease can also be transmitted mechanically by human means when using scalpels, needles, or tattoo equipment contaminated by carriers of anaplasmosis and then used on susceptible animals.

Treatment of anaplasmosis is difficult. Tetracyclines are the drug of choice for treating and controlling the disease.

Prevention of the disease takes planning. Control of insect vectors, strict sanitation of surgical instruments and needles, testing the herd and removing infected carriers are positive steps in the control process. Providing a medicated mineral, from March thru frost, containing chlortetracycline is an effective and proven approach in anaplasmosis control. Commercial medicated mineral mixes are available or cattle producers can make their own by mixing 40% dicalcium phosphate, 40% salt, 10% soybean meal and 10 % aureomycin 50.