

Anthrax

- ◆ **Anthrax is a highly contagious disease of domestic and wild animals as well as of humans.**
- ◆ **Animals usually die suddenly without any symptoms of illness.**
- ◆ **There is, however, an effective vaccine to prevent the disease.**
- ◆ **The correct handling of affected carcasses will also prevent the spread of the disease.**

What causes anthrax?

The disease is caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. When animals die of anthrax and particularly when carcasses are cut open, resistant spores are released which can survive in the soil for many years. The bloody discharge from the nostrils, mouth and anus, as well as skin, bone and other tissue are important in the spreading of the disease.



Scavengers, vultures and even flies play an important role in the spreading of these resistant spores. Runoff water can also disperse the spores to pans or dams and create concentrated sources of infection in other areas.



The infection is usually acquired by drinking contaminated water, grazing on contaminated pastures or when animals lick contaminated skins, bones, blood or carcasses.



What are the symptoms of anthrax?

- ◆ Susceptible animals may die within 2 hours after contracting the disease!
- ◆ Affected animals develop a fever.
- ◆ They have difficulty in breathing.
- ◆ Muscle tremors and reddening mucous membranes may be observed.
- ◆ A fluid containing blood sometimes exudes from the nostrils, mouth and anus.
- ◆ Advanced cases may have a swelling of the throat and neck. This will often lead to breathing problems and difficulty in swallowing.

How can anthrax be diagnosed?



Anthrax may be diagnosed by microscopic examination of a blood smear. Consult your local veterinarian or animal health technician.

Remember ... if anthrax is suspected carcasses should never be cut open!!

The higher incidence of anthrax poses a threat to human health because this disease is transmissible to man.

How do humans contract the disease?

Humans become infected after **direct contact** with affected animals or their products, by **inhaling dust** which contains spores or **ingesting infected meat**.

Although people normally contract a cutaneous or skin form of the disease, **death** may occur in humans as a result of anthrax.



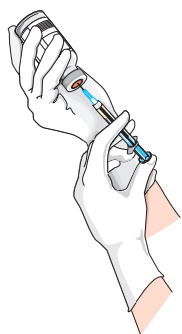
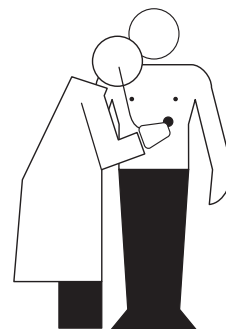
If anthrax is suspected carcasses should never be handled, cut open or eaten!!

Can animals or humans be treated for the disease?

Animals often die before the disease can be diagnosed or the animals treated.

Humans and “resistant” animals, such as pigs, dogs and horses can, however, be treated with antibiotics.

Consult your doctor if contact with anthrax is suspected.



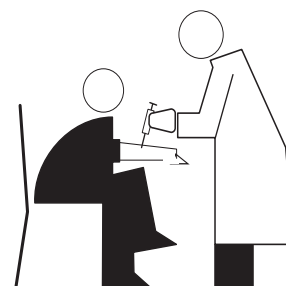
What can be done to control anthrax?

Animals

- ◆ **Vaccinate** livestock yearly against anthrax.
- ◆ Do not cut open carcasses of animals which have died if anthrax is suspected.
- ◆ Bury these carcasses at a depth of at least 2 metres and treat the soil liberally with chloride of lime.
- ◆ Carcasses may also be burnt without cutting them open.
- ◆ Report suspected cases immediately to the nearest animal health technician or state veterinarian.
- ◆ The state veterinarian may prescribe methods to disinfect the premises, transport vehicles and other products.

Humans

- ◆ Humans at risk may be vaccinated against the disease.
- ◆ Avoid direct contact with a carcass of an animal suspected to have died of anthrax. Always wear **protective clothing** when the carcass is buried or burnt.
- ◆ **The carcasses of affected animals should never be eaten!!**



Anthrax can be prevented with the cooperation of every farmer!!

Contact your nearest state veterinarian for further information

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