



Lumpy Skin Disease, a serious menace for your entire herd

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Animal health is key on a farm as the saying goes, “a healthy herd amounts to a happy farmer” but it all depends on management.

Subsequently, a season may pass without any serious disease outbreak, and sometimes it passes and sweeps almost your entire herd. Which is quite worrisome to anyone working with domesticated animals.

Well, sail safely with us, as we discuss at length Lumpy skin disease, which is prevalent in Africa and Middle East but has risen recent concernings among International health authorities for expanding towards Europe as well, since 2015.

What is Lumpy skin disease?

Lumpy Skin Disease is an infectious disease in cattle caused by a virus of the family Poxviridae and Capripoxviruses that derives from pox and is vector-borne among cattle and the Asian water buffalo.

- It is transmitted by either direct contact with infected animals or if animals are bitten by bloodsucking insects.
- Characterized by visible nodules on the skin.
- These viruses are brick-like in shape when viewed under a microscope.
- Lumpy skin disease is also known as the Neethling virus



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What are the symptoms of Lumpy skin disease?

The main peculiar symptoms are nodules: they can be seen around the neck, scrotum and mammary glands, and can be between two to five centimeters in diameter. The nodules can develop into deep sores and flies buzz as they feed on the sites, making it even more difficult to control the spreading of the infection.

Other common symptoms:

- Nasal discharge and discomfort.
- Loss of appetite and withdraws from the entire herd.
- High fever
- Low performance for instance among dairy in lactation

Concerns on the disease

- High economic losses due to reduced animals sent to abattoirs for slaughter or dairy production. Statistics show a drastic decrease on income earned as a result of outbreaks of Lumpy skin disease.
- Deep wounds on the skin simple entail that, even upon recovery, will fetch a low price when sold.

What can be done to manage Lumpy Skin Disease?

- Supervised movement of cattle, as unmonitored animals are likely to catch the disease whilst grazing from an infected herd.



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- Immediate isolation if one suspects Lumpy skin disease, and report to a local veterinarian.
- Farmers located within 50km radius of the area with Lumpy skin disease, should be notified so they take precautions and less risk their herds coming in contact.
- Feed and water troughs for the infected animals must be separate from the rest of the herd, which is not infected, this reduces the risk of transmission of the disease.
- Information sharing through social media networks, to sensitize livestock keepers on diseases and generally keeping an eye on the herd.
- In consultation with veterinarians, broad spectrum antibiotics can be administered to suppress the swelling as there is no definite vaccine for Lumpy skin disease.

Furthermore, on a management as a farmer, it is always **crucial to have records of all happenstances** on a farm and taking note of diseases that occur from season to season.

In conclusion, Lumpy Skin Disease can be detrimental to the health of your cattle herd, therefore it needs to be attended too with promptness.

References

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