July 12, 2019

New York Livestock Business Owners

Dear Sirs and Madams,

The states of Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado are currently experiencing outbreaks of Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV). This is an infrequent event that may occur this time of year in the western US. The virus can affect all hoofed animals, although sheep and goats are reported to be somewhat resistant. It causes vesicles (blisters) in and around animals’ mouths, noses, sheath, belly, and teat ends. The skin between the hoof wall and lower leg may also erupt with vesicles. Nearly all animals which get sick with VSV will recover.

The disease concerns us and must be reported for two main reasons:

1. The outward signs of VSV look just like Foot and Mouth Disease. The only sure way to tell them apart is with a lab test. Foot and Mouth Disease has huge implications for trade both interstate and international. If people aren’t reporting livestock with vesicles because they think it’s just VS and not Foot and Mouth, that’s a problem because we might miss the early stages of a Foot and Mouth outbreak.

2. Even though most animals recover, in the meantime, they really suffer, and they will be less productive. They can slough most of the lining of their mouth and tongue. That means they won’t eat and drink enough and they lose condition and get weak. The animals also get predisposed to other infections. Some animals may be euthanized due to humane reasons.

For these reasons, New York and most other states have special rules for livestock imports coming out of states affected by VSV. Here are NY’s rules pertaining to VSV:

- There must be no imports of equines, bovines, swine, goats, sheep, deer, elk, or llama from anywhere within 10 miles of any place where vesicular stomatitis was found in the 30 days preceding entry into NYS.

- For animals coming out of any state that’s had VS in the 30 days preceding entry into NYS, the CVI (health certificate) must include this certification statement from the vet who examined the animals:
"All animals identified on this health certificate have been examined and found to be free from vesicular stomatitis and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the past 30 days these animals have not been exposed to said disease, nor held at a location within 10 miles of any place in which said disease has been found to exist."

You can find the latest information on VSV at this location:  https://tinyurl.com/VS-sitrep

If you are importing livestock into New York State, the Division of Animal Industry strongly recommends that you check our website to see what the current requirements are. You can find them here:  https://www.agriculture.ny.gov/ai/import_export.html

If you still have questions after visiting the website, please write us at:  DAI@agriculture.ny.gov .

Lastly, please do yourself a favor and make your preparations for imports and exports well in advance. Waiting to ask for help until the afternoon before you have a trucker scheduled to pick up the animals will cause all of us a lot of stress and will often leave you with poor results and extra expenses.

Sincerely,

David C. Smith, DVM
Director, Division of Animal Industry