

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY SERVICES

# Theileriosis (January disease) in cattle



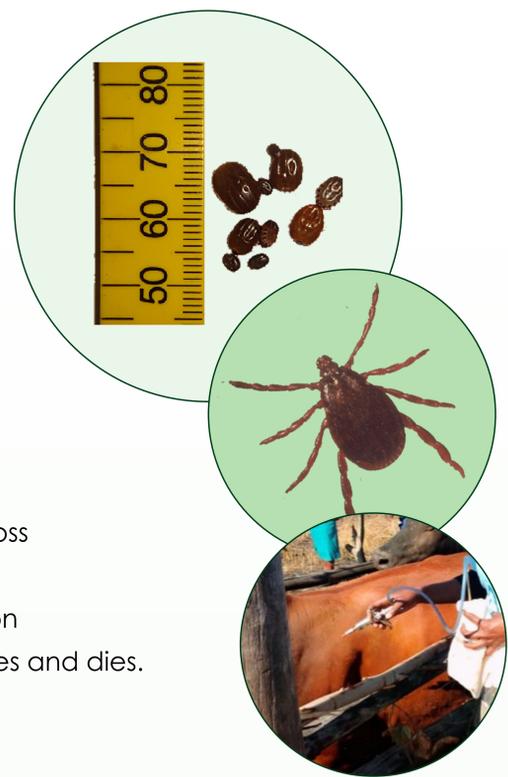
Theileriosis is a notifiable disease in Zimbabwe and if a farmer suspects it on his/her farm, he/she is compelled by law to report this to the Department of Veterinary Services.

## What is Theileriosis (January Disease)

It is a disease that usually affects cattle. It is common between December and March. Of late theileriosis now occurs all year round but **increases significantly** as from November, reaching a peak in January. Theileriosis usually occurs in high rainfall areas and also in low rainfall areas such as Chiredzi where it is transmitted from buffaloes.

## How does it spread?

To become infected cattle must be bitten by a tick, which is carrying the disease. **Theileria is not spread by direct animal-to-animal contact and does not affect other species, or humans.** It is spread through the bite by the brown ear tick



## What signs do you see in an animal affected by January Disease?

- . Swelling of the lymph nodes under the ears and on the shoulder
- . Cloudiness of the eyes
- . Difficult breathing with froth exuding from the nose and the mouth
- . Weakness
- . Pale or yellow (jaundice) mucous membranes i.e. the gums, inside the vulva and the white around the eye)
- . Depression
- . Not eating
- . Weight/condition loss
- . Abortion
- . Poor milk production
- . The animal collapses and dies.

## Theileriosis signs and Symptoms



Tick infestation



Froth



Corneal opacity



Swollen neck lymph nodes

## What do you see in animal that has died from January Disease?

- . Generalized swelling of the lymph nodes,
- . Froth in the windpipe and fluid in the lungs.
- . Clouding of the eyes is quite common.

## What do you do if you suspect your animal is suffering from January disease?

- . Contact your nearest Veterinary Office. It is important to work closely with your veterinarian to get the best advice for your circumstances.
- . Anti-parasitic drugs can be effective if treatment is done early.
- . Reducing stress on affected animals is very important to control the severity of the disease and the number of animals developing clinical signs. This can be achieved by:
  - . Once a day milking.
  - . Minimised handling.
  - . Walking cattle at their own pace, where necessary.
  - . Good quantity and quality of feed.
  - . Optimal trace element levels.

## Prevention and control of January Disease!

- . Regular dipping and Tick grease application
- . Vaccination
- . Allowing minimal exposure to ticks during low risk period to encourage building of immunity in calves.
- . Minimise nutritional or disease stress to animals to reduce chances of animals developing severe disease.
- . Ensure good nutritional and health status of calves during the first year of life.
- . Theileriosis is controlled through legislation, Animal Health (Theileriosis ) Regulations, 1976. In the event of an outbreak, a quarantine order is instituted for 28 days, during that period a 5-5-4 dipping interval is effected concurrently with the application of tick-grease.

## Diagnosis and treatment

- . Treatment is done by sign and symptoms.
- . Diagnosis is through blood smear examination under microscope after proper staining.
- . Lymph node biopsy
- . Buparvaquone is the drug of choice.
- . Oxytetracycline, antipyretics, haematinics, antihistaminics, ruminotorics and liver tonics are given as supportive treatment options.



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