



Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) in Cattle

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) is a virus that mainly affects wild and domestic deer, especially white-tailed deer. Depending on the year, there can be significant numbers of death losses in wild and captive deer populations due to EHD. Cattle can become affected, but this is less common.

Cause

EHD is a virus spread by biting flies of the *Culicoides* genus. These are more commonly known as biting midges or “no-see-ums”. The virus is not directly contagious; it needs to be spread through the bite of a midge. The virus can be replicated in the midge and the deer or cow.

As the weather becomes cooler, the virus becomes less active, and its survival will diminish. Because of this, the spread slows down and new cases drop once freezing temperatures arrive.

Clinical Signs

Cattle are susceptible to EHD infection, and are generally mild infections with excess salivation, fever, and weight loss as common symptoms. Unlike deer, cattle death losses are very infrequent. Other signs include stiffness, lameness, sores on the coronary band of the hoof, crusty peeling muzzle, crusty skin on teats, fever, and loss of appetite. Sores and ulcers in the mouth are also common. *Cattle herd death losses and abortions are likely to be from co-infections with other diseases, such as tick-borne diseases like Anaplasmosis and Theileriosis. Work with your herd veterinarian on submitting appropriate samples to [ODA ADDL](#) for diagnostic workup if necessary.

Treatment

There is no vaccine for the EHD virus itself in cattle. However, veterinarians working with affected herds could prescribe anti-inflammatory medications and antibiotics in hopes of preventing problems with secondary bacterial infections that may crop up where the lesions occur.

Prevention Strategies

Fly control may help prevent disease spreading. The use of fly dusters and pour-on fly repellents may be helpful. If cattle are indoors, it is recommended to use strong fans for increased air flow, since the gnats are not strong flyers. Whole animal sprays of pyrethroids may provide the best protection – especially with coverage to the under belly and legs where these gnats feed. When using any of these products, make sure you contact your herd veterinarian so appropriate dosages and withdrawal periods are followed. Organophosphate insecticides are less desirable due to shorter residual life. Keep animals in open areas away from edges of woods. If practical, keeping cattle out of wooded areas, especially around wet spots can help decrease the risk of exposure. Actively monitor your herd for ticks and contact your herd veterinarian to develop a comprehensive herd health plan.

Resources

[Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease \(Deer\) | Ohio Department of Natural Resources](#)
[Submitting to ADDL | Ohio Department of Agriculture](#)



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