

## OSU EXTENSION NEWS

# Watch for Anaplasmosis in cattle



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**A**naplasmosis is an infectious disease in cattle that infects red blood cells. It is transmitted from animal to animal by biting flies (horsefly, stable fly), ticks and contaminated needles or surgical instruments (dehorners, castration

instruments, tattoo instruments).

The disease is typically age related. Calves less than one year of age usually show no symptoms of this disease and are considered mild. Cattle 12 to 24 months of age can show acute signs of the disease, but it is rarely fatal. However, animals that are two years and older will show acute signs of the disease, and mortality rates may be as great as 50 percent if animals are left untreated.

Outbreaks generally occur in late summer and early fall. The incubation period is from 21 to 45 days, with an average of length of 30 days. Early clinical signs include rectal

temperature of 104F to 107F, a decrease in appetite, pale mucous membranes, lethargy, a decrease in milk production and weakness. As the disease progresses, other signs may be noted such as weight loss, yellowed mucous membranes, constipation, excitation, abortion and death. Death occurs due to the large number of red blood cells being lost. This inhibits the animal's ability to provide adequate oxygen to the tissues, and death occurs due to suffocation.

Prevention of this disease can incorporate many factors. Insect control can be difficult, but pesticide applications to the herd may limit the num-

ber of potential vectors. Feeding chlortetracycline at the rate of 0.5 mg per pound of cow body weight during the vector season will help prevent transmission of anaplasmosis. CTC may be included in feed, mineral mix or feed blocks.

It also is important to be mindful of contaminated needles or instruments. When performing herd work, change needles often, and keep instruments in a disinfectant between uses. Vaccines are also available to help with the control of anaplasmosis. Contact your local veterinarian for additional prevention or treatment protocols.