



238-116 Ave Dawson Creek, Large Animal (250) 782-1080 Small Animal (250) 782-5616

Dcvet.ca

ANTHRAX

Anthrax is a highly contagious and usually fatal disease that is caused by bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*. Although, anthrax has not been a significant problem in the Dawson Creek area, cases of anthrax have been reported several years ago in livestock located near Fairview and more recently in a herd near Fort St. John. The disease can affect many mammals, including humans; cattle and sheep seem to be more susceptible than horses and goats. It is a disease that occurs around the world and sporadically shows up.

The bacteria forms spores which can survive in the soil for hundreds of year. Cases of anthrax typically occur during warm summer months: July, August and September. Heavy rainfall or wet weather followed by a period of hot dry weather can result in an outbreak because spores can be brought to the soil surface. Some outbreaks have been associated with excavation or soil movement which brings spores to the surface. Infection occurs when spores are ingested, inhaled or penetrate the skin. Cattle and sheep are more susceptible because they graze close to the ground and are more likely to ingest some soil with the spores in it. After exposure animals usually become sick within a week. Often the first indication of a problem is finding animals suddenly dead. After death, a bloody discharge exudes from the mouth, nose and anus, effectively re-contaminating the soil with more bacteria.



The treatment of anthrax can be difficult because the disease progresses very quickly, hence there is often insufficient time to initiate treatment before death. If antibiotics can be administered promptly, therapy may be useful since *Bacillus anthracis* is highly susceptible to many antimicrobials. Anthrax can be prevented by vaccination. Annual vaccination is recommended for cattle and sheep 2-4 weeks before spring turnout on pasture and during disease outbreaks in endemic areas. Carcasses are a source of recontamination of the soil so if anthrax is suspected notify your veterinarian and cover the carcass with a tarp. All contaminated carcasses will have to be properly handled and disposed of to prevent further contamination and spread of the disease.

If you have any further questions about anthrax or other animal diseases, feel free to contact the veterinary staff at the Dawson Creek Veterinary Clinic.

Dawson Creek Veterinary Clinic
Fall Seminars 2018
Committed to quality, friendly care.

Bovine Health Seminar
November 13, 2018

More than just foot rot – preventing and treating lameness in cattle
- Dr. Chris Clark

New Antimicrobial Regulations
- Dr. Zoe Ross will give a brief overview and answer your questions

\$15

Our seminar will be held at the George Dawson Inn
Doors open at 5:00 p.m. Roast Beef dinner at 6:00 Seminar to follow.

Please purchase or reserve tickets before November 5!

Large Animal: 250-782-1080 info@dvet.ca
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