



United States Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Vesicular Stomatitis ... or Foot-and-Mouth Disease?



Clinical signs are identical. In some cases almost the entire epithelial surface of the tongue is detached.



Ruptured blisters on nose, mouth, and tongue of cow.



Ruptured vesicle on the upper lip.



Economic Affairs Committee Meeting
September 9, 2005

Vesicular Stomatitis . . . or Foot-and-Mouth Disease?

VESICULAR STOMATITIS (VS) is a viral disease that affects cattle, horses, swine, sheep, goats, many wild animals, and occasionally—man. It causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth (on the tongue, dental pad, and lips), and in the nostrils, on areas around the hooves, and on the teats.

These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful, infected animals generally refuse to eat or drink and show signs of lameness. Severe weight loss often follows, and in dairy cattle, a severe drop in milk production commonly occurs.

The outward signs of VS are identical to those of FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD), a foreign animal disease that has not occurred in the United States since 1929. The only way to tell the two diseases apart is through laboratory tests.

In the past, VS occurred in the United States only in the summer and early fall months. Usually, little spread occurred, and only a few clinical cases were seen. The disease was transitory and generally ran its course in about 2 weeks.

How the disease spreads from herd to herd is not fully known. Once in a herd, the disease apparently moves from animal to animal by contact or exposure to saliva or fluid from the ruptured lesions. Isolation can reduce spread, and antibiotics help prevent secondary infections.

Anyone noting any signs of a vesicular condition—slobbering, lameness, loss of weight, drop in milk production, and blisters—should *report* these signs to their veterinarian or State or Federal animal health officials immediately! Early detection is vital in preventing the nationwide spread of FMD, eliminating possible invasions of FMD, and most importantly, protecting our valued livestock industries.

For more information or help, call: