



Lumpy skin disease

March 2022



Lumpy skin disease (LSD) is a devastating viral disease of cattle and water buffalo. The disease is **not present in Australia** but has rapidly spread through south Asia, with cases now confirmed in Indonesia.

About the disease

LSD is a highly infectious disease of cattle and water buffalo that does not affect other livestock or humans. It is caused by a virus like sheep pox and goat pox and is mostly spread by biting insects such as flies and mosquitoes, and possibly ticks. The disease can also be spread by fomites through such things as contaminated equipment and in some cases directly from animal to animal.

Infection with lumpy skin disease typically causes an acute disease with fever, depression, and characteristic skin nodules. There may also be a marked reduction in milk yield as well as abortion in pregnant animals.



Signs of Lumpy skin disease in animals

Cattle overseas infected with Lumpy skin disease

- Firm, raised nodules of up to 50mm in diameter develop on the skin around the head, neck, genitals and limbs. Nodules can develop on any part of the body.
- Scabs develop in the centre of the nodules after which the scabs fall off, leaving large holes that may become infected.
- Swelling of the limbs, brisket and genitals may occur.
- Watering eyes.
- Increased nasal and salivary secretions.
- Some animals with the disease may be asymptomatic (have the disease but not show signs).

LSD has shown the ability to establish and spread in a wide range of environmental and production systems around the world.

Impacts

If Australia was no longer recognised as being free from lumpy skin disease this would have significant consequences for our beef, water buffalo, and dairy cattle industries, along with substantial trade impacts.

Where the disease is found

LSD is endemic in most of Africa, parts of the Middle East and Turkey. Since 2019, the disease has spread through China and Southeast Asia; and in 2021, the disease was confirmed in Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. Indonesia reported confirmed cases in March 2022.

Vaccination

There is currently no LSD vaccine approved for use in Australia.

In southern Europe vaccination has been used to effectively control outbreaks, however in other areas vaccination was not successful.

Keeping it out of Australia

Eradication of LSD is difficult and early detection is essential for successful control and the possibility of eradication.

Cattle producers, and particularly communities across Australia's north need to be particularly vigilant for the disease and be able to identify it in infected animals.

LSD is a nationally notifiable disease which means it must be reported to a veterinarian or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on **1800 675 888**. This number will connect you with your state or territory's department of primary industries or agriculture.

Cattle producers and others working in the industry are reminded to practice good biosecurity on their property and when working with animals. You can find out more at farmbiosecurity.com.au

Government action

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment undertakes a range of activities to manage biosecurity risks to Australia. The Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy works with state and territory governments on targeted surveillance activities and delivers public awareness campaigns to support the early detection of exotic animal diseases such as lumpy skin disease.

The department's strict livestock importing protocols are designed to minimise the risk of exotic disease incursions, and returning livestock vessels are also managed by department's biosecurity officers.

Border requirements are in place for incoming air and sea passengers, imported cargo and mail items to ensure the biosecurity risks are managed at the border.

Import conditions are reviewed when the level of risk changes.

Australia has well-developed disease response arrangements in place that involve all levels of government and the livestock industries. Those procedures are regularly tested, updated and improved.

For more information go to awe.gov.au/lumpyskin



Cattle overseas infected with Lumpy skin disease.



Close up of nodules caused by Lumpy skin disease. Photo courtesy of Noah's Arkive PIADC