



Anthrax: Guidance for Veterinarians

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

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Anthrax is an ever-present risk to livestock in Utah. The spores can survive decades in the soil, and only become infectious when soil conditions are ideal. The map to the right shows the locations in the western United States where anthrax spores might be found. Veterinarians must remain vigilant when investigating reports of deaths involving multiple animals.

Signs of Disease

- Sudden death (most common)
 - +/- Lack of rigor mortis
 - +/- Blood around body openings
- Weakness or staggering
- Fever
- Difficulty breathing
- Bloody diarrhea

If you suspect anthrax:

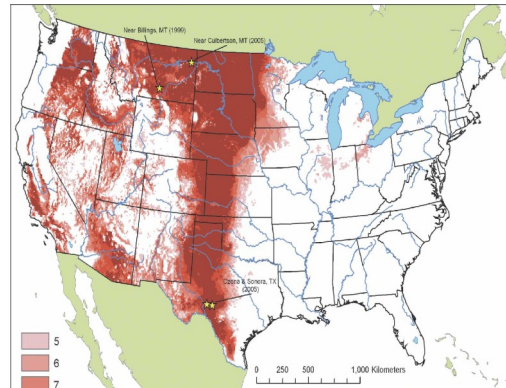
- **DO NOT open the carcass**
- **DO NOT move the carcass**
- **REPORT to the State Veterinarian**

If You Choose to Take Samples

- Preferred—Whole blood (purple top) from jugular vein
- Other samples if whole blood is not available
 - Blood-soaked cotton swab or umbilical tape from fluids from body openings
 - Cotton swab soaked with fluid from the spleen (**only** if body was open before suspicion of anthrax)
- Submit to [Utah Public Health Laboratory](#) (NOTIFY BEFORE SUBMISSION at (801) 965-6586.)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Protective, impermeable clothing (rubber apron and boots)
- Long sleeves and pants
- Rubber gloves
- Respirator with HEPA filter



Map from Blackburn, J, et al, Modeling the geographic distribution of *Bacillus anthracis*, the causative agent of anthrax disease, for the contiguous United States using predictive ecological niche modeling, *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 2007. 77:1103.

Disinfection of Equipment

- Hot water and detergent to remove blood, dirt, hair, and other materials
- 10% bleach with a 10-minute dwell time
- Avoid calcium-containing disinfectants

Susceptible Species

- Cattle and bison
- Sheep and goats
- Horses and mules
- Llamas and alpacas
- Pigs
- Farmed elk

Quarantine of Infected Herds

- 30-day quarantine
- No movement of hides/wool
- Dispose of carcasses by burning in place
- Move exposed animals to new pasture
- Vaccination of all susceptible animals
 - Withhold: 42 d meat, 0 d milk
 - May treat with penicillin before vaccination (delay vaccination)