



# Livestock Notifiable Disease Factsheets

## Contagious Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia

**If you suspect signs of any notifiable disease, you must immediately notify a Defra Divisional Veterinary Manager.**

### Contagious Bovine pleuro pneumonia

Contagious Bovine Pleuro-pneumonia (CBPP) is a contagious disease affecting the lungs and pleura of cattle and other closely related ruminants, and is caused by an infective organism - *Mycoplasma mycoides*.

### History and spread of the disease

Bovine pleuro-pneumonia was a major disease of livestock through the nineteenth century. Attempts made in this country to legislate for its prevention failed until 1869, when the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act was passed, and pleuropneumonia was included in the list of contagious diseases. Further provisions were made in the Animals Order 1875, requiring the restriction of affected animals, compulsory slaughter of diseased animals for which the owner was compensated, and disinfection of infected premises. The alternative of inoculation was considered but was rejected. The Report of the Veterinary Department in 1876 noted that inoculation did not afford absolute security against the disease and added that

*"the question of compulsory legislation in reference to inoculation for pleuro-pneumonia is not likely to be entertained by the Government, and the advocates of this extreme measure appeared to forget that it would be opposed by breeders of pedigree stock which would at once be fatal to its success. It may not be a matter of much consequence if confined to animals of small value, but to risk the lives of cattle whose value is reckoned by hundreds or thousands, on the plea of affording doubtful protection against a disease to which they are only remotely liable, would be to perpetrate a monstrous injustice in the name of the law. The matter is one which may safely be left to the common sense of stock-owners".*

Evidently the slaughter policy met with success. Pleuro-pneumonia had been eradicated from Great Britain by 1898 and has not subsequently occurred here. Nevertheless, it survives in other parts of the world. It is included in the OIE listings as a Class A disease, making it one of the more economically serious diseases of livestock.

### Symptoms

The first signs of the disease often escape notice. The temperature rises and a dry husky cough is present, especially when the animal first gets on its feet or when made to run. In marked cases its breathing is rapid, and the movement of the flanks is increased. If pressure is applied to the ribs, the animal may grunt or show signs of pain. Some of the affected animals may become greatly emaciated and die but others, especially those that have passed the acute stages, may appear to recover. It does not follow, however, that the latter are cured: they continue to affect others for a very long time.

## Post-mortem

The chest cavity often contains a yellow fluid. The lungs may be fixed to the ribs by a thick yellowish membrane. The lungs are very solid in parts, and the surface is often yellow. The septa (or fibrous tissue lines) are very broad, and a yellow fluid exudes from the cut surface. In old cases a grey area of soft dead tissue is often present in the lung, and this may be surrounded by new fibrous tissue. Sometimes, abscesses are found.

## Legislation

CBPP is compulsorily notifiable under the Animal Health Act 1981. The Pleuro-pneumonia Order of 1928 remains in force, reflecting the length of time since the last outbreak in this country. This Order lays down the rules to be observed at an Infected premises. Movement restrictions are applied on such premises. The Order provides for compulsory slaughter of infected animals, powers for seizure, and compulsory disinfection. Compensation is provided for in Schedule 3 to the Animal Health Act 1981 but the maximum rates are seriously out of date and would have to be updated in the event of a confirmed case of the disease.

There are no infected area provisions, only those for Infected premises. "Premises" here also means a market, fairground, sale-yard, place of exhibition, lair, landing place, wharf, railway station, common, unenclosed land or other place where a suspect or diseased animal is found. A local authority inspector who suspects that disease exists or has existed within 56 days shall restrict the movement of animals into or out of the premises. Carcasses, fodder, litter etc are similarly restricted. The movement of animals which are suspected of having been in contact with infected animals or otherwise exposed to the disease shall also be restricted. The owner of such an animal shall not move any animal onto or from the premises

## EU Legislation

**EU Directive 82/894** includes CBPP in the list of diseases that are compulsorily notifiable throughout the European Union.

**Information current of June 16, 2005**