



# Livestock Notifiable Disease Factsheets Goat Pox

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

## Definition

Goat pox is a contagious viral disease, also known as variola caprina. Sheep pox and Goat pox are probably caused by the same virus. The virus is spread by the respiratory route and is most likely to occur with crowding and gathering of stock. Virus in dried scabs can be infective for up to 6 months. In susceptible populations mortality may be high among young animals, in some cases up to 100%.

## History and spread of the disease

Sheep pox and goat pox occur in Africa north of the equator, in the Middle East and Central Asia as well as India. European sheep breeds are highly susceptible to the virus.

## Clinical signs

Initial signs are rapid onset of fever, salivation and nasal discharge and conjunctivitis. Skin lesions erupt in a few days. These develop into vesicles, followed by pustules and scabs. Small red spotty areas appear on the udder and teats, which may burst and form scabs. There is a danger that the orifices of the teats become affected, leading to mastitis. Affected skin is very sensitive. Goats may show a slight fever and become distressed. Internal lesions in the lungs can result in respiratory distress. In resistant animals skin lesions are mild. Death can occur due to the effects of the virus or due to secondary bacterial septicaemia.

## Great Britain Legislation

Goat Pox is included in the Specified Diseases (Notification and Slaughter) Order 1992 and the Specified Diseases (Notification) Order 1996, making suspicion of this disease compulsorily notifiable, and giving slaughter powers under section 32 of the Animal Health Act 1981 to the Secretary of State.

## European Union Legislation

Council Directive 82/894 made Sheep and Goat Pox (Capripox) compulsorily notifiable throughout the European Community.

Sheep and Goat Pox (Capripox) is covered by Directive 92/119. Affected animals would have to be slaughtered, and a 3km protection zone and 10 kilometre surveillance zone set up around the infected premises. After cleansing and disinfection the restrictions would remain in force for at least 21 days, this being the maximum incubation period of this disease.

## Pictures of the disease



Goat Pox: Necrotic (gray) lesions in the skin of a goat



Sheep pox. Lesions on the muzzle and lips.

**Information current of June 16, 2005**