



For Immediate Release
April 23, 2024

Anthrax Confirmed in a Schleicher County Sheep

AUSTIN, TX – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials received confirmation of anthrax in a crossbred sheep, on a premises in Schleicher County on April 19, 2024. This is the first reported case of anthrax in Texas this year.

The premises is located northwest of Eldorado, Texas, and has been quarantined. TAHC rules require proper disposal of affected carcasses on the premises prior to release of the quarantine.

Anthrax is a bacterial disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, which is a naturally occurring organism with worldwide distribution, including certain parts of Texas. Anthrax cases in Texas are most often found in a triangular area bound by the towns of Uvalde, Ozona, and Eagle Pass. Schleicher County is near this area.

“Protecting animal and human health is key when handling zoonotic diseases like anthrax,” said Dr. Bud Dinges, TAHC state veterinarian and executive director. “Diligent efforts to reduce human exposure, vaccinate susceptible animals before they are infected, and consult a veterinary practitioner or TAHC region office if you suspect disease in livestock is important to mitigating the potential effects and spread of the disease.”



An increase in anthrax cases after periods of wet, cool weather, followed by hot, dry conditions is common. In these conditions, animals ingest the odorless, colorless, and tasteless anthrax bacteria when they consume contaminated grass and hay or by inhaling the spores. Outbreaks usually end when cooler weather arrives.

After exposure to anthrax, it typically takes three to seven days for animals to show clinical signs. Once symptoms begin, death usually occurs within 48 hours. Acute fever followed by rapid death with bloody discharge from body openings are signs of anthrax in livestock. If a noticeable amount of deer or exotic wildlife are found dead, and carcasses show bleeding characteristic of anthrax, remove livestock from access to carcasses immediately.

Owners of livestock and animals displaying clinical signs consistent with anthrax or experiencing death of animals should contact a private veterinary practitioner or a TAHC official immediately.

Producers are encouraged to follow basic sanitation precautions when handling affected livestock or carcasses. It is recommended to wear protective gloves, long sleeve shirts, and to wash thoroughly



afterward to prevent accidental spread of the bacteria to people. For more information on how anthrax affects humans please visit <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/anthrax/Information.aspx>.

For more information about anthrax, visit:

- TAHC anthrax factsheet: https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactsheet_Anthrax.pdf
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension anthrax publication: <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/asset-external/anthrax-conditions-symptoms-and-advice-for-landowners/>
- Texas Department of State Health Services anthrax resources: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/anthrax>
- Contact your local TAHC Region Office: <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/agency/contact.html>

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