



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Cattle Fever Ticks

Updated as of January 2017

What is a cattle fever tick?

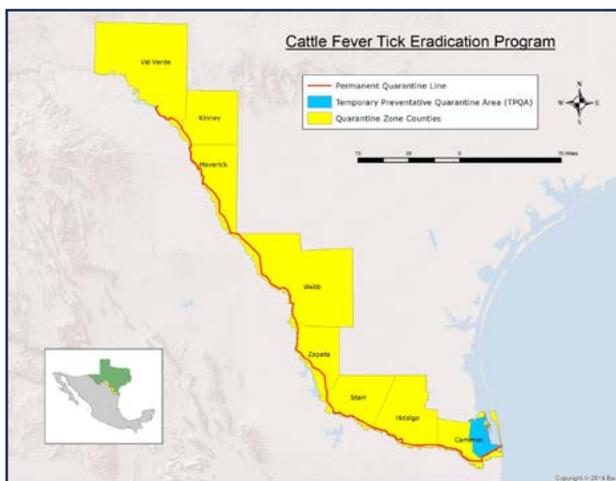
Cattle fever ticks, known scientifically as *Rhipicephalus* (formerly *Boophilus*) *annulatus* and *R. microplus*, are a significant threat to the United States cattle industry. These ticks are capable of carrying the protozoa, or microscopic parasites, *Babesia bovis* or *B. bigemina*, commonly known as cattle fever. Cattle fever attacks and destroys the animals' red blood cells, causing acute anemia, high fever, and enlargement of the spleen and liver, ultimately resulting in death for up to 90 percent of susceptible naive cattle.

What animals are potential hosts of cattle fever ticks?

The potential hosts include, but are not limited to, cattle, horses, white-tailed deer, and exotic hoofstock, such as nilgai antelope and red deer.

What is the Permanent Fever Tick Quarantine Zone?

The Permanent Quarantine "Buffer" Zone, also known as the Systematic Area (SA), serves as the buffer between Mexico, where ticks are endemic, and the rest of the fever tick-free United States, called the Free Area. The SA consists of over a half million acres, stretching from the Gulf of Mexico near Brownsville, Texas, to Amistad Dam north of Del Rio, Texas.



What is a Temporary Preventative Quarantine Area (TPQA)?

A CPQA or cluster of CPQAs are changed to a TPQA when a complex situation arises, usually involving multiple infested premises. Formalizing CPQAs as

a TPQA helps ensure better compliance with tick regulations and awareness of the situation by the public. TPQAs are created by a formal notice process outlined in the TAHC regulations. A TPQA is also referred to as a "Blanket Quarantine."

What is a Control Purpose Quarantine Area (CPQA)?

A control purpose quarantine area is an area designated by the commission for a systematic inspection of livestock, susceptible wildlife and premises around an infested premises not located in the permanent quarantine zone. The control purpose quarantine areas have similar movement requirements to the permanent quarantine zone or a temporary preventative quarantine area (TPQA). The boundaries of the area will be determined by evaluation of the barriers to the potential spread of ticks. Tick quarantine areas are comprised of four type of premises: infested, adjacent, check, and exposed.

What is an Infested Premises?

An infested premises is a premises where fever ticks have been found on livestock or wildlife that have been on the premises for more than 14 days.

What is an Adjacent Premises?

An adjacent premises borders an exposed or infested premises, including premises separated by roads, double fences, or fordable streams.

What is a Check Premises?

A check premises is a premises located in the tick eradication quarantine area, TPQA, or CPQA boundary that is not classified as an infested, exposed, or adjacent premise.

What is an Exposed Premises?

A premises is considered as an exposed premises if systematic treatment has not been completed and if either of the following conditions apply:

- Ticks have been found on livestock that have been on the premises for less than 14 days.
- A premises that has received exposed livestock, or equipment or material capable of carrying ticks from an infested or exposed premises.



What if I see ticks on my animal(s) that I believe could be fever ticks?

Contact your private veterinary practitioner, TAHC region office, or USDA personnel to have the animal(s) inspected.

What happens when fever ticks are detected on your premises?

When ticks are found on your livestock or wildlife, the premises is designated as an “infested premises.” The infested premises is placed under quarantine and subject to movement restrictions, inspections, and treatment as prescribed by the tick regulations. Other premises in the proximate area are designated as “adjacent, exposed or check premises” and they are also subject to various movement restrictions, inspections, and treatments. A TAHC employee will contact you directly if you are in the proximate area of an infested premises.

Why is a quarantine so important when ticks are found on your premises?

Movement restrictions are a critical component in stopping the spread of the ticks to new areas. Additionally, fever tick quarantines require inspection of cattle on not only infested premises but also surrounding premises, providing surveillance. Surveillance is a critical component in disease eradication as it allows the TAHC to monitor the effectiveness of eradication efforts. Lastly, fever tick quarantines require systematic treatment of infested and exposed livestock and wildlife hosts, which results in the removal of ticks not only from the animals, but ultimately the environment. It is important to understand that, unlike most other livestock diseases, a fever tick quarantine includes not only the infested and exposed animals, but the premises where they are or were located and the surrounding premises. Fever ticks are an environmental issue, not just an animal issue.

What are the fever tick treatment options for cattle?

If cattle fever ticks are found on an animal on your premises a TAHC representative will create a plan to most effectively and efficiently rid your premises of fever ticks. The options include but are not limited to:

1. **Injectable Doramectin:** The first option for treatment is a ready-to-use injectable. Doramectin

is given on a 25 to 28 day schedule for the 6 to 9 month quarantine period. This treatment option has been proven to be effective against the fever tick. It also relieves the stress of dipping and/or moving cattle from the premises, and reduces the number of times that cattle must be gathered during the quarantine period by about one-half, resulting in substantial cost savings for the rancher when compared to a dipping schedule. It is important to note that Doramectin products have a pre-slaughter withdrawal period.

2. **Scheduled Dipping:** The second option is a prescribed schedule of dipping the cattle on the premises every 7 to 14 days for 6 to 9 months. The dipping schedule is based on the fever tick’s life cycle. The cattle from a quarantined pasture are sprayed on the ranch or trucked to an authorized dipping vat, where they are treated under the supervision of a TAHC or USDA inspector, who must certify that 100 percent of the herd was treated. The animals are returned to their pasture, where more ticks will attach to the animal before the next scheduled dipping. This procedure is repeated again and again to “clean” the pasture of ticks during the minimum 6 to 9 month quarantine period.
3. **Vacating Premises:** The third option for eliminating the fever tick operates on the principal of “starving out” the tick, by removing the hosts. This approach, known as “vacating” the pasture, can be a more economical option for some ranchers as it cuts the costs of repeatedly rounding up, transporting and dipping cattle. This option begins with dipping the cattle on a 7 to 14 day schedule. The cattle must have two consecutive tick-free inspections and dippings before the herd can be moved to a new, tick-free pasture. The tick-infested pasture is then left empty, or vacated, for nine months. Although vacating the premises of all livestock is often less expensive for the landowner, it is much less effective in eliminating fever ticks due to free-ranging deer and exotics. The white-tailed deer, nilgai, and other wildlife that can carry the fever tick must be treated by approved methods during the period the pasture is left vacant in order to reduce the perpetuation of the tick.

Is there a fee to have my animal(s) inspected and treated?

No. Inspections and treatments are free of charge.



What are the fever tick treatment options for free-ranging wildlife?

Treating free-ranging wildlife or exotic animals for fever ticks poses a particular challenge. These animals cannot be gathered like livestock in order to be dipped or sprayed with a TAHC approved acaricide. Treatment is currently limited to feeding ivermectin treated corn or the use of four-poster feeders with permethrin infused rubbing posts, depending on the time of year. Ivermectin treated corn has been approved to feed to white-tailed deer by the Food and Drug Administration and can only be done legally by TAHC and USDA personnel. All ivermectin treated corn must be withdrawn no later than 60 days before the start of deer hunting season.

What about fever tick treatment options for penned deer or exotics?

White-tailed deer or exotics maintained in pens can be treated systematically (i.e. as cattle would be) or treated as wildlife (ie. as wild deer would). Deer can be scratched and treated with a TAHC approved acaricide spray when going through a chute prior to movement from a premises. When planning to move penned deer from a quarantined premises, contact TAHC ahead of time to devise a plan to scratch and treat all cervids that will be leaving the premises.

What do I do if I harvest wildlife on a quarantined premises or inside a quarantine area?

All deer, nilgai antelope, and other exotic livestock capable of hosting cattle fever ticks; including their heads, hides, and capes; must be inspected by a TAHC or USDA representative prior to movement, disposal from the premises.

- The owner/operator must coordinate all inspections with TAHC and USDA personnel and present the wildlife in a timely manner that is conducive to a thorough inspection. Every effort must be made to schedule inspections during daylight hours.
- TAHC and USDA personnel will scratch inspect animals and hides presented.
- Following inspection, TAHC and USDA personnel will treat all live animals presented with an approved acaricide.
- Following inspection, the owner/operator must treat all hides by freezing for a period of 24 hours, or submit the hides for treatment with an approved acaricide by TAHC and USDA personnel.

- A person must be issued a movement permit by a TAHC representative prior to moving an animal from the premises it was harvested. In addition, a resource document must be signed by the landowner, lessee or hunter for proof of sex verification.
- The movement permit must accompany the shipment at all times.

To learn more watch our video about hunting in a cattle fever tick quarantine area <https://youtu.be/kbNwI-cG3l4>.

Who do I contact to have my animals or wildlife inspected?

Contact your local region office. You can find your region office at http://www.tahc.texas.gov/agency/TAHC_RegionalOfficeMap.pdf.

What can I do to prevent cattle fever ticks from being introduced on my premises?

If you purchase new animals do not commingle them with your herd until you are certain they are free of disease and pests. Early reporting of unusual or suspicious pest infestations prevents fever ticks from establishing a large population on your property. Report pest infestations to your private veterinarian or your local TAHC region office at http://www.tahc.texas.gov/agency/TAHC_RegionalOfficeMap.pdf.

Is there additional literature and resources that I can read or watch about cattle fever ticks?

Yes. For additional information about the Cattle Fever Tick visit:

- https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/feverticks-pests/
- http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/tick/downloads/pest_alert.pdf