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For more information,  
Contact: Wendie Powell  
Livestock Production Agent, Wildcat Extension District  
[wendiepowell@ksu.edu](mailto:wendiepowell@ksu.edu), (620) 784-5337  
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## **Livestock Industry Set to Take another Hit**

Of the current buzzwords coming through media, and through the grapevine, is VSV, or vesicular stomatitis virus. This contagious virus was first confirmed in Butler County on June 16, and it has spread to other counties, including Montgomery County.

Vesicular stomatitis does not normally kill affected animals, but it can cause economic losses for livestock producers by preventing animal movements and impacting international trade. Farms with affected animals are quarantined until 14 days after lesions appear on the last case at that location. Quarantine periods can be lengthy if the disease continues to spread within the premises. Quarantines are not lifted until a veterinarian has examined all susceptible animals on the premises.

This virus primarily affects horses, but can also affect cattle, sheep, goats, swine, llamas and alpacas. At this time, there are confirmed cases of VSV in Kansas in horses and cattle.

Horse and livestock owners should continue to be watchful of symptoms and be in communication with their veterinarian if there is cause for concern. The incubation period for vesicular stomatitis is two to eight days. The first sign of illness is often excessive salivation, caused by the lesions in the mouth. The blisters will swell and break open, which causes mouth pain, discomfort, and reluctance to eat or drink, leading to severe weight loss. Lesions or scabs will appear on the muzzle, lips, ears, coronary bands and ventral abdomen. If the coronary bands of the hooves are affected, then lameness can occur. A spike in body temperature before or at the same time lesions first appear can be noticed. This is a painful virus and can be costly to manage.

Because insects that are the primary source of infection, the best way to combat the slow spread is to take aggressive steps to limit exposure to biting flies, ticks and midges. It can also be spread by nose-to-nose contact between animals. Establish insect control measures that consider the animal as well as the area the livestock reside in.

The virus itself usually runs its course in five to seven days, and it can take up to an additional seven days for the infected animal to recover from the symptoms. There are no approved vaccines for VSV.

Humans are rarely affected with the disease, though it is possible for humans to contract it when handling infected animals. VSV can cause flu-like symptoms if infected saliva gets into an open wound, eyes, or mouth. People handling potentially infected animals should wear gloves for protection, and talk with a physician if they have questions.

The largest concern with the spread of vesicular stomatitis is the impact it will have on the markets, leading to impacts on the price of meat. The movement of livestock is already being restricted; Arkansas requires an Entry Permit number for all hoof stock originating from a county or neighboring county of any VSV quarantined facility in any affected state. Other states and Canada are likely to increase restrictions on live livestock imports. Animal health officials strongly encourage all livestock owners and veterinarians to call the animal health authority in the destination location for the most current import requirements prior to travel.

For more information on this virus, or for fly control measures, please contact Wendie Powell, Livestock Production Agent, (620) 784-5337, wendiepowell@ksu.edu..

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