ALERT!

Theileria orientalis Ikeda in Cattle

An Emerging Risk

***Theileria orientalis* Ikeda,** a tickborne parasite, has been isolated as a cause of disease and death in cattle from neighboring states (Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee). An Emerging Risk Notice has been issued for *T. orienatalis* Ikeda by USDA APHIS.

ARE KENTUCKY CATTLE AT RISK?

Yes, Virginia Tech Animal Laboratory Services has reported identification of *T. orienatalis* Ikeda in cattle from Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Kansas.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

This disease is transmitted to cattle by the bite of the T. orienatalis Ikeda- infected Haemaphysalis longicornis tick, commonly referred to as the Asian longhorned tick (ALT) or through use of contaminated needles. Currently, ALT has been identified in seven Kentucky counties (Boone, Breathitt, Floyd, Madison, Martin, Metcalfe, and Perry).

WHAT ARE THE CLINICAL SIGNS IN CATTLE?

This tickborne protozoon infects red and white blood cells causing an infectious anemia. Clinical signs are similar to anaplasmosis and include pale mucous membranes, jaundice, difficult breathing, lethargy, occasional abortions, and deaths. It is possible that *T. oreintalis* Ikeda may cross react with anaplasma serological tests. Diagnosis is made by a PCR test of cattle blood. Tick identification is helpful in the diagnosis and premise assessment.

IS *T. orientalis Ikeda* TREATABLE?

There is no known treatment or vaccine. Recovered cattle may serve as carriers of the disease. Disease control is achieved by controlling the tick vector, ALT. Humans are not known to become infected by this pathogen.

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