

## Diseases of Cattle

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# LISTERIOSIS

Listeriosis, a disease of the central nervous system, is caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. This bacterium can live almost anywhere--in soil, manure piles, and grass. Listeriosis is common in cattle, sheep and goats and can occur in pigs, dogs, and cats, some wild animals, and humans. Animals infected with *Listeria* can show signs restlessness, loss of appetite, fever and nervous system disorders. Although not seen in every case, the most notable symptom gives this disease its nickname, "Circling Disease." Cattle with listeriosis are often seen walking in circles. Other, more subtle symptoms include uncoordinated movements, leaning against objects, and progressive paralysis. Death can occur within 2 to 3 days after the onset of symptoms, but cattle can survive for up to 2 weeks with the disease.

Healthy animals are not usually affected by *Listeria*. Cattle with lowered resistance to disease are prime candidates for listeriosis. Recognition of symptoms is important for successful treatment. Most animals will recover if treated with a broad spectrum antibiotic started early. Diseased cattle should be separated from healthy cattle and placed on a prolonged therapy program. In herds of valuable cattle, it may be advantageous to treat the whole herd. Vaccines are not available in the U.S.

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