For Immediate Release
August 11, 2021

Anthrax Confirmed in a Hardeman County Cow

AUSTIN, TX – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials received confirmation of anthrax in a cow on a Hardeman County premises on August 6, 2021. This is the second Texas county, following Val Verde County in July, to have a confirmation this year.

The premises is located in the northern portion of the county, northwest of Quanah, TX, and has been quarantined. TAHC rules require proper disposal of affected carcasses and vaccination of other cattle on the premises prior to release of the quarantine.

"TAHC personnel will continue to closely monitor the case in Hardeman County," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC State Veterinarian and Executive Director. "Because this isn't a common area for anthrax to occur, we encourage producers in the county to consult with their local veterinary practitioner if they suspect their animals are exposed to anthrax or are interested in vaccinating their livestock."

Anthrax is a bacterial disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, which is a naturally occurring organism with worldwide distribution, including certain parts of Texas. Cases in Texas are most often found in portions of Crockett, Val Verde, Sutton, Edwards, Kinney and Maverick counties. This case in Hardeman County is unusual in that anthrax hasn't been reported in the county for several decades.

An effective vaccine for livestock is available and is commonly used in areas that are prone to have anthrax. To be effective, the vaccine must be used before the animal is exposed to the bacteria. There is no approved vaccine for deer. For further details on vaccinating your livestock for anthrax, please consult a local veterinarian or a local TAHC region office. All label directions should be followed carefully, including personal protective measures while handling the vaccine, to prevent accidental exposure.

It is common to see an increase in anthrax cases after periods of wet, cool weather, followed by hot, dry conditions. During these conditions, animals can ingest the anthrax bacteria when they consume contaminated grass and hay, or inhale the spores. Outbreaks usually end when cooler weather arrives.

After exposure to anthrax, it typically takes three to seven days for animals to show symptoms of anthrax. Once symptoms begin, death will usually occur within 48 hours. Acute fever followed by rapid death with bleeding from body openings are all common signs of anthrax in livestock. If you observe wild or domestic animals dying, more than 10 animals at a time, and carcasses show bleeding that is characteristic of anthrax, move livestock away from carcasses immediately.

Owners of livestock and animals displaying symptoms consistent with anthrax or experiencing death of animals should contact a private veterinary practitioner or their [TAHC Region Office](#) immediately.

Producers are encouraged to follow basic sanitation precautions when handling affected livestock or carcasses. It is recommended that you wear protective gloves, long sleeve shirts and 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://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EWF-060-anthrax-conditions-symptoms-and-advice-for-landowners.pdf
- Contact your local TAHC Region Office

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.