

Bovine Tuberculosis

CAUSE: This disease is caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* or *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. This disease is not present in any herds in Vermont.

EFFECT: The classic lesion of tuberculosis (TB) is a tubercle, or tumor-like lump filled with thick white pus. Tubercles and associated lymph nodes can grow quite large. In cattle and primates, lesions are most commonly found in the lungs and regional lymph nodes; in deer and poultry, lesions are most common in the intestines.

How is Bovine TB spread? Bovine TB can be spread through the air by infectious droplets contacting eyes or nasal mucus membranes; by eating bacteria in contaminated food or water; or by contacting infected carcasses that have not been disposed of properly.

Can Bovine TB affect people? Yes, in rare cases, bovine TB can be transmitted from infected animals to humans. Pasteurization kills the causative organism in milk.

How can Bovine TB be prevented? Livestock imported into Vermont must test negative for tuberculosis.

What if there is an outbreak? An outbreak is unlikely since the disease has been nearly eliminated from the US. Vermont is certified free of tuberculosis.

For more information on Bovine TB, see:

[USDA APHIS: Tuberculosis Disease Information](#)

[The Merck Veterinary Manual: Tuberculosis and other Mycobacterial Infections](#)

[State of Michigan: About Bovine Tuberculosis](#)