

Brucellosis



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CAUSE: Brucellosis is caused by bacteria of the genus *Brucella*. Several species of *Brucella* can infect different species of animals. The main threat in the US is to cattle, bison, and pigs. This disease is not present in any herds in Vermont.

EFFECTS: Brucellosis results in decreased milk production, abortion, infertility, and lameness which cause economic losses to cattle owners.

How does Brucellosis spread? The disease is most commonly spread by contact with aborted fetuses, placental materials, or vaginal discharges from infected animals.

Can Brucellosis affect people? Yes, in humans, the infection is known as “undulant fever” or “Bang’s disease” and has symptoms similar to severe influenza. Pasteurization of milk and cooking of meat prevent food-borne transmission of Brucellosis.

How can Brucellosis be prevented? Livestock imported into Vermont must test negative for Brucellosis. Many herds still vaccinate replacement heifers—indicated by a tattoo and orange metal id tag in the right ear.

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 Brucellosis.

For more information on Brucellosis, see:

[USDA APHIS Fact Sheet: Questions and Answers about Brucellosis](#)

[The Merck Veterinary Manual: Brucellosis in Large Animals](#)