

Public Health Significance of Leptospirosis

The occurrence of leptospirosis is most common after periods of heavy rainfall and persons get infected from walking in dirty flood waters and swimming in slow flooding rivers or pools of water.

It is known to be a zoonotic disease the bacteria can be spread from animals to humans.

Although occupational groups at risk are sugar-cane cutters, workers in sewer systems, abattoirs, livestock farmers, veterinarians; it can affect all persons.

Persons become directly infected after exposure to animal urine which can contaminate the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or cuts.

Humans can get indirect exposure when rats or mice urinate on foods.



Rat urine is a major means of spread of leptospirosis in humans.

Veterinary Services Division MANDATE

- **Keeping exotic diseases out of Jamaica**
- **Safeguarding the Livestock Industry**
- **Facilitating Trade**
- **Improving Public Health**
- **Enhancing Food Safety**
- **Promoting Animal Welfare**

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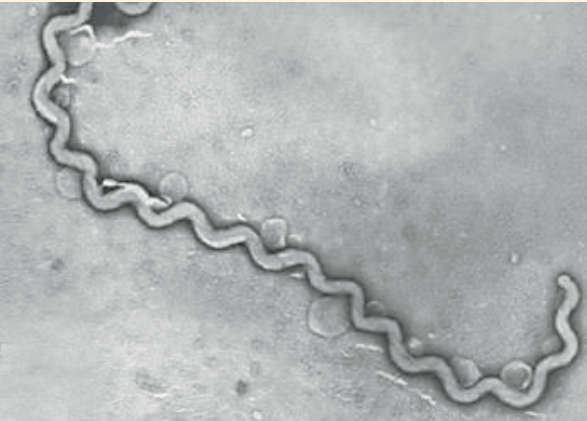
Leptospirosis in Farm Animals



***"Ensuring Healthy Animals...
for a Healthy You"***

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis (**LEP-toe-sp-ROW-sis**) also known as “**lepto**” is a bacterial disease. This bacteria leptospira. is spiral shaped and can affect several warm blooded animals.



Leptospira as seen under an electron microscope.

What animals on a farm can get leptospirosis?

Cattle



Sheep



Goats



Pigs



Dogs



How can my animal get leptospirosis?

- The urine of infected animals
- Ingestion of feed, water or soil contaminated with rat or mice urine
- through cuts in the skin or through mucous membranes (eyes, vagina, nose or mouth)



Urine of infected animals can contaminate feed and water and infect other cattle and humans.

What are the signs of Leptospirosis?

- Fever, Anorexia, Jaundice and a sudden rise in body temperature (**40.5 – 41 F**) in calves. The degree of jaundice reflects the severity of the disease.



Jaundice in a 4 month old kid infected with leptospirosis.

- Lowered milk and calf production in dairy cattle.
- abortion and still births generally occur 3-10 weeks after initial infection, but are more common during the last stage of pregnancy.
- In pigs, abortions occurring 2-4 weeks before term is the most common symptom. Piglets produced at term may be dead or weak and may die soon after birth.

How can you protect your animals from Leptospirosis?

- Restrict your animal from gaining access to contaminated water and feed.
- Do not allow farm animals to drink from or swim in contaminated bodies of water such as ponds.
- Provide feed and water in clean troughs and remove uneaten feed or water.
- Put a Pest Control plan in place to manage rats on your farm.
- All farm animals should be tested for leptospirosis.
- Contact a licensed veterinarian to have your sick animal examined and treated.