

Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness FAQs

Lumpy Skin Disease

What is Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)?

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), caused by Lumpy Skin Disease virus, is a disease of cattle and water buffalo which can cause fever, depression, and characteristic lumps on the skin.

Which countries currently have LSD?

Originally limited to Africa, since 2019 the disease has spread through China and Southeast Asia. In 2021 the disease was confirmed in Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. In March 2022 it was officially reported by Indonesia, and in Singapore.

How is LSD transmitted?

LSD is mainly spread by biting insects such as mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks. Additionally, the movement of infected animals can result in local or long distance spread of the disease.

How would LSD arrive in Australia?

Australia has strict rules for the import of animal products to try to prevent the introduction of exotic diseases. However, LSD could enter Australia through the illegal importation of cattle products. It could also enter via an insect from a country that has the disease. Insects from other countries can travel to Australia by wind, or in a plane or boat.

How likely is a LSD incursion in Australia?

Experts believe there is an 28% chance of LSD arriving in Australia within the next five years.

Would Australia seek to eradicate LSD if an incursion happened here?

If LSD occurred in Australia, the objective would be to eradicate it as quickly as possible. This would involve humane destruction of infected animals, vaccination, the disinfection of infected properties and a vector control program. Australia's Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) contains the nationally agreed approach for the response to an outbreak of LSD in Australia.

Can people catch LSD?

LSD is not zoonotic and does not infect people.

Is it safe to eat dairy or meat from LSD affected livestock?

The dairy products and meat of infected cattle are safe to eat. Australian meat processing standards ensure no animals with signs of disease enter the food chain and Australian food standards also ensure milk for human consumption is only sourced from animals with no signs of disease.

Is there a vaccine for LSD?

There are several vaccines available overseas, but no Australian company currently makes a vaccine for LSD. If the disease occurs here, the aim is to import a suitable vaccine. For this to happen, all required approvals and an emergency use permit need be in place.

Can we vaccinate our animals now?

If we vaccinate farm animals against LSD before an incursion, Australia will lose its disease-free status. This would affect our export markets, so Australia will not vaccinate animals before the disease occurs in Australia.

Why do we have to import LSD virus?

All commercially available LSD vaccines contain live virus. Importing LSD virus will ensure Australia has access to safe and effective vaccines against the disease. Access to the live virus will enable Australian scientists to undertake research, which could lead to better vaccines for Australia and the region, noting this will take several years with no guarantee of a successful outcome. Importing live LSD virus will also help improve Australia's diagnostic capacity.

Will we lose our disease-free status if Australia imports vaccine/LSD virus?

No. Australia will only lose its disease-free status if there is an outbreak of the disease resulting in infection of farm animals. Holding the virus or vaccines in a strictly controlled facility (e.g. the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness or a quarantine facility) does not affect Australia's disease-free status.

How do I report a suspected case of LSD?

If you have any suspicion of LSD in cattle, please call your local state or territory veterinary officer, your regular vet, or the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888**.

What will happen to our exports if we get LSD?

In the event of an outbreak of LSD in Australia, the trade implications are difficult to predict with certainty as such issues are highly situational and will vary across markets. If commodities require certification that Australia is free from LSD, those exports will be temporarily suspended while health certification requirements are renegotiated.