

**CONTAGIOUS PUSTULAR
DERMATITIS, OR “SOREMOUTH”
IN SHEEP AND GOATS**

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What is Contagious Pustular Dermatitis

- A zoonotic disease-transferable from animal to animal and animal human
- Is also known as “soremouth”
- Viral infection, in the “pox” family
- Primarily seen in sheep and goats



What is Soremouth caused by?

- A Pox virus
- Exists for months in dried scabs
- Lives in the soil and in carrier animals who may not show any symptoms
- Almost all animals exposed will develop the disease
- Vaccinating a virus-free herd will introduce the disease to the herd and premises



How is it Transmitted?

- Animal direct contact, entering small cuts in the skin
- Carrier or Chronically infected animals
- Equipment, Bedding in pens, Fences, and Feeders
- Teets on the Ewes or Does
- Soil

Transmission

- Young animals are most susceptible, but older animals can be infected
- Primarily occurs on lips and nostrils of affected animal, but also may develop on ears, eyes, feet, limbs, udder, and genital areas
- Can also grow in the upper digestive tract of the animal, but cannot spread through the body



Transmission

- Course of disease is 1 to 4 weeks
- Two to three days after exposure sores and scabs appear
- At end of course scabs drop off and sores heal without scarring

Diagnosis

- Usually based on clinical signs, along with contagious nature of disease
- Other serious diseases whose symptoms resemble soremouth are: foot-and-mouth disease, sheep and goat pox, and bluetongue



Treatment

- Treatment of soremouth is usually unrewarding
- Does not respond to antibiotics because it is a virus
- Removing the crusty scabs may delay healing, promote scarring, and increase the handler's chance of becoming infected with the virus

Treatment

- Ewes and does with infected udders should receive special care with udder salve
- In worst cases lambs and kids should be artificially fed and should not be put on other ewes or does to nurse, as this will transmit the disease to other animals
- Soremouth is rarely fatal

Prevention

- Best prevented by maintaining a closed and virus-free herd
- New animals should be quarantined until soremouth can be ruled out, but some animals can serve as carriers when they appear to be virus free
- Virus can survive for months and years in barns, pens, troughs, feeders, gates, and walls



Vaccination

- Made from live virus isolated from scabs of “modified” soremouth infections
- Does not produce a strong or long lasting immunity, and may not always prevent animals from becoming infected but it may reduce the severity or duration of the disease
- Vaccination is infectious to humans

Vaccination

- Pregnant females may be vaccinated two months prior to lambing or kidding to prevent natural soremouth from occurring during the nursing period, but should be moved to a fresh area for lambing or kidding

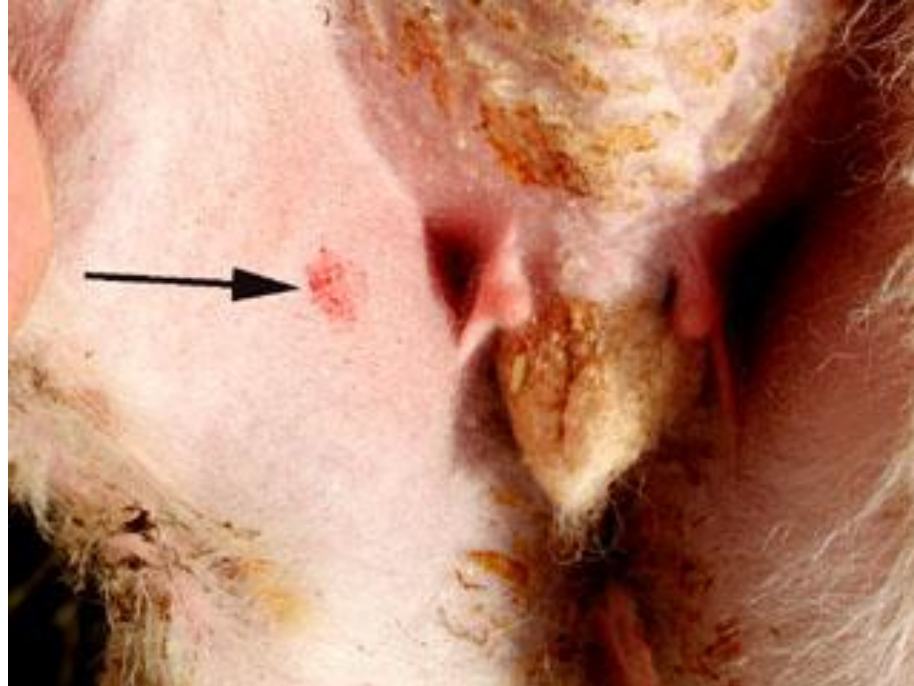
Vaccination

- Lambs and kids can be vaccinated if the risk of disease is high and is recommended for those used for show purposes
- Recently vaccinated animals should not be turned out with other sheep and goats, as this could spread the virus



Vaccination

- Usually done on the inside of the thigh, by scratching to make a raw (not bleeding) area and applying the vaccine to the raw area. A reddened area should appear in a few days.
- Manufacturer's directions should be closely followed
- Vaccine has short life of only about 10 days



The black arrow identifies the typical scab that begins forming 2-3 days after vaccination on the inside of the thigh.

People and Soremouth

- Can cause painful lesions (usually on hands)
- Can last two months
- Rarely causes serious illness in people
- Can resemble serious infections such as anthrax

