



## Cooper Zimbabwe (1992) (Pvt) Ltd

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### Coopers Bulletin

## Lumpy Skin Disease – vaccinate or lose

Lumpy Skin Disease is estimated to have cost the cattle industry in Zimbabwe thousands of United State Dollars during the 2012-13 season, both through deaths and production losses. It is expected to cause more losses again this season given that where outbreaks have occurred there are chances of a significant number of cattle carrying the virus (recovered carriers) and the high fly populations common during the rainy season. Before examining ways of minimizing its effects on cattle production let us look at what the disease entails.

### What is Lumpy Skin Disease?

This disease, caused by a pox - like virus (Neethling strain), and is characterised by the appearance of varying numbers of nodules on the skin.

It is initially transmitted by biting insects and as a result generally occurs in late summer and autumn. Once the disease has broken out on a farm the virus can be transmitted from infected to healthy cattle by direct contact.

### What signs should we look for?

There is an incubation period lasting one to two weeks. The animal initially comes off feed; there is a fever up to 41°C and a dramatic drop in milk yield. Numerous painful round lumps suddenly develop on the skin ranging in size from 1 - 5 cm diameter. The hair on the lumps stands upright. These nodules become hard and eventually fall out leaving a raw yellow wound, which can become infected, causing scarring to the hide on healing. Often one or more limbs may swell causing the animal to be lame.

A large number of the herd can become infected although mortalities seldom exceed 10%. The complications and productivity losses can be considerable. Complications include mastitis with extensive udder damage, sterility in bulls, permanent damage to the windpipe, pregnant cows may abort and extensive screw - worm strike may occur.

### Can it be treated?

There is no specific treatment for this disease. Broad-spectrum antibiotics such as Coopermycin will prevent complications from secondary bacterial infection. Careful nursing and adequate nutrition are essential.

### Can it be prevented?

There are only two factories making the Lumpy Skin Disease vaccine in our region, namely Onderstepoort (LSD vaccine) and Intervet (Lumpyvax) and these vaccines are distributed by Coopers. During outbreaks needle transmission of the disease is possible if a sterile needle is not used for each animal. The best time to vaccinate is before the rainy season. However it can also be done at any other time if farms in the district are known to have the disease.



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The use of synthetic pyrethroids such as Decatix and SpotOn may assist in generally lowering the biting insect populations thereby reducing the likelihood of initial spread.

Please note that there are some conditions, which can be confused with LSD such as “false lumpy skin disease”. With this there are no serious signs of illness and the pimples are quite superficial. Allergic reactions of the skin may cause lumps on the skin but these usually rapidly disappear and have no accompanying signs of illness.

#### Summary

This disease can cause severe economic losses due to hide damage, mortalities, cost of treatment and through loss of production due to the complications mentioned. It takes many years for a herd to completely recover from LSD. Vaccination annually or during periods of risk is advisable. If you suspect you have cases of LSD consult your veterinarian for confirmation and organise a strategy to minimise its spread and losses. The Coopers technical advisors are there to help you and it is advisable to inform the Vet Department personnel whenever there is an outbreak.

#### Remember!

- It is important to use a new needle for each animal when vaccinating a herd at risk (from a neighbour’s herd or infected animals within the herd).
- Vaccination into the loose skin of the dewlap is recommended to allow for any swelling, which may occur.
- Screwworm strike of the nodules is common - apply EXIT for treatment and prevention of fly strike.
- COOPERMYCIN is a good broad-spectrum antibiotic to use in the more seriously debilitated animals and those with pussy infection of the nodules.

Coopers synthetic pyrethroid products, which offer fly control, are DECATIX and SPOTON.

