

CLIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

OPTIONAL
LOGO

Customer Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip code

Phone number, Alt. phone number, Fax number, e-mail address, web site

Orf (Contagious Ecthyma)

Overview

- Orf is a highly contagious viral disease that can cause ulcerative, pustular or wart-like lesions of the skin of sheep, goats, and camelids.
- This disease can be transmitted to humans via handling of infected animals or the live virus vaccine.
- Although most affected animals recover, orf can affect large numbers of animals in a group, and creates restrictions on movement of affected animals.

Species and Animal Groups Affected

- Orf occurs commonly in sheep, and can also affect goats, and occasionally llamas and alpacas.
- Young kids and lambs are most often affected, and does and ewes may develop teat lesions while nursing affected offspring, which may lead to mastitis or refusal to allow nursing.

Signs

- Skin lesions can appear raised, blistered, pustular, scabby, ulcerative or wart like.
- Lesions usually start at the corners of the mouth and spread around the lip margins to the muzzle. Occasionally other areas such as the skin around the eyes, feet, vulva, or udder may be affected, or lesions may even occur in the mouth or esophagus.
- Outbreaks of disease usually last six to eight weeks.

Causes and Risk Factors

- This disease primarily affects young animals.
- Onset and spread is enhanced by comingling of animals, and stressors such as transport or handling for procedures.

Treatment

- No specific treatment is available for this viral disease.
- Affected animals should be isolated and provided with ready access to palatable water and feed, and monitored closely.

Expected Course and Prognosis

- Most infected animals experience mild signs of disease and lesions will heal spontaneously in three to four weeks.
- Animals with severe and widespread lesions may develop secondary bacterial infections or may display severe weight loss.

Management Considerations

- The live virus vaccine will control disease in groups, but will perpetuate infection in the environment and can induce disease in naive animals and humans.
- The vaccine should not be used in locations where the disease has never been diagnosed.
- When animals in a flock/herd are vaccinated for the first time, all susceptible animals on the premises should be vaccinated to avoid vaccine-induced orf in non-vaccinated animals.
- People handling the vaccine should wear gloves and wash their hands.
- On premises where orf is endemic, all lambs and goat kids should be vaccinated at 6 to 8 weeks of age. In subsequent years, only new lambs/kids and newly acquired animals need to be vaccinated.
- During vaccination, an area of the skin of the animal to be vaccinated is scarified, most commonly the medial aspect of the thigh, and the vaccine is brushed onto the site. The appearance of a localized lesion at the site two to three days later indicates successful vaccination.
- Vaccinated animals or those that recover from natural infection are susceptible to reinfection which tends to be milder and more transient.

Notes

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