

Publication

Lumpy Skin Disease

From [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/)

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What is lumpy skin disease?

Lumpy skin disease is a contagious viral disease characterised by nodules on the skin of cattle and water buffalo. The disease can cause reduced milk yield, severe emaciation, complications secondary to the skin lesions, permanent damage to hides, and long term illness.

Ireland has never reported lumpy skin disease. An outbreak here could have a severe negative impact on animal welfare and the livestock sector. Outbreaks can result in substantial economic losses and movement or trade bans. The disease does not affect humans.

Lumpy skin disease is a notifiable disease, which means that any suspected case must be reported to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine without delay.

What animals are affected by lumpy skin disease?

Lumpy skin disease affects cattle and water buffalo (*Bubalis bubalis*).

Where is lumpy skin disease present in the world?

Lumpy skin disease has never been reported in Ireland. The disease is endemic in most of Africa, parts of the Middle East and Turkey. Outbreaks of the disease have occurred in recent years in Asia, several Balkan countries, the Caucasus region and Russia. In 2012, the disease spread from the Middle East to south-east Europe, affecting EU Member States (Greece and Bulgaria). The EU is currently free of the disease.

Can lumpy skin disease affect humans?

Lumpy skin disease virus does not affect humans and does not pose a risk to food safety.

How can an animal become infected with lumpy skin disease?

The main mode of transmission of the lumpy skin disease virus is through biting insects feeding on skin lesions of infected animals and subsequently spreading the virus to immunologically naive animals. Many types of insects can transmit the virus to animals, such as mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks. Insects that spread infection between animals are most active between April and November in Ireland and are commonly found on farms.

The virus may also be spread through use of contaminated needles or farm equipment. Spread through direct contact with an infected animal is considered unlikely. Infected bulls can excrete the virus in semen, however transmission of the virus via infected semen has not been demonstrated.

How would I know if an animal had lumpy skin disease?

Clinical signs of the disease in infected animals range from inapparent to very severe; 10-30% of affected animals can show symptoms, and death may occur in 1-5% of cases. The virus has an incubation period of between 4-14 days. Fever usually precedes the emergence of the characteristic skin lesions.

Clinical signs that may be found in an acutely affected animal include:

- Fever ($>40.5^{\circ}\text{C}$) may persist for up to one week
- Listlessness and reluctance to eat

- Reduction in milk yield
- Weight loss
- Discharges from the eyes and nose
- Characteristic nodular skin lesions (10-50 mm)

The number of lesions can vary from a few to many, and occur most commonly on the head, neck, genitalia, perineum (under the tail), udder and limbs. The lesions may also develop internally in the gastrointestinal and respiratory tracts.



Clinical Signs of Lumpy Skin Disease

Download (<https://assets.gov.ie/261483/01a793a3-afbc-4340-b3dc-a47ab5093e6f.pdf>).

View (</pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/261483/01a793a3-afbc-4340-b3dc-a47ab5093e6f.pdf#page=null>).

What should I do if I suspect lumpy skin disease?

If you suspect lumpy skin disease in one of your animals you must report it immediately to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Contact your local [Regional Veterinary Office](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/9dc27-contact-us/?referrer=http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/#regional-offices) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/9dc27-contact-us/?referrer=http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/#regional-offices>) (RVO) or the National Disease Emergency Hotline on 01 492 8026 (outside of office hours) to report a suspect case.

How could lumpy skin disease enter Ireland?

The principal route by which lumpy skin disease could enter Ireland is the importation of an infected animal from an affected country. Other potential routes include importing infected biological products or infected insects carried by wind into the country or on planes or boats.

How can we keep Ireland free from lumpy skin disease?

Strict rules are in place to prevent the entry of lumpy skin disease into Ireland. Countries/ regions with outbreaks of lumpy skin disease are not permitted to export cattle and certain products to EU Member States. Live animals and animal products entering Ireland from non-EU countries require veterinary health certificates and are inspected by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine officials on arrival into the country.

Biosecurity recommendations outlined in the following sections should be followed to keep serious diseases like lumpy skin disease out of Ireland.

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity is the combination of all measures, whether physical or through management, taken to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of diseases. Biosecurity is the basis of all disease control programs, as improved biosecurity will result in lower rates of disease overall. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to biosecurity as the circumstances of each farm or premises are unique. Therefore, biosecurity measures must be tailored to each individual setting.

Biosecurity is about preventing disease from getting into a premises but also in the event of an outbreak, minimising spread within a premises and ensuring that disease doesn't get out to infect other animals.

Biosecurity does not have to be expensive. Small changes can have a large impact, e.g., quarantine of recently purchased animals away from the rest of the herd for at least four weeks, disinfection points for boots at the entrance/exits to all cattle housing, handwashing, etc.

What can I do to improve Biosecurity?

The best protection for your herd against cattle diseases is a strong biosecurity policy. Good biosecurity improves overall herd health and productivity by helping to keep out disease. In the event of an outbreak, it also limits the spread of disease within and off your premises.



Biosecurity Advice for Farmers Importing Livestock

[Download \(https://assets.gov.ie/261484/8446d4d4-53cd-4d63-9495-2f2019a9ea87.pdf\)](https://assets.gov.ie/261484/8446d4d4-53cd-4d63-9495-2f2019a9ea87.pdf)

[View \(/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/261484/8446d4d4-53cd-4d63-9495-2f2019a9ea87.pdf#page=null\)](#)

What would happen if an outbreak of lumpy skin disease were to occur in Ireland?

In the event of an outbreak of lumpy skin disease in Ireland, control measures are introduced to eradicate the disease. Restriction zones, known as protection (20 km) and surveillance (50 km) zones, are established around the location of an outbreak. Susceptible animals on the affected farm are culled and tracing of any movements of in contact animals and animal products is performed. Monitoring and sampling of animals on farms within the restricted zones is carried out as well as restrictions on any activities that could spread the disease to other animals or farms. Other countries would place trade restrictions on the export from Ireland of susceptible species and their products.

Further Information

Further information on lumpy skin disease can be found here:

[World Organisation for Animal Health \(founded as OIE\): Lumpy Skin Disease Technical Card \(https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2021/03/lumpy-skin-disease.pdf\)](https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2021/03/lumpy-skin-disease.pdf)

[FAO: Lumpy Skin Disease: A Field Manual for Veterinarians \(https://www.fao.org/3/i7330e/i7330e.pdf\)](https://www.fao.org/3/i7330e/i7330e.pdf)

[European Food Safety Agency: Lumpy Skin Disease \(https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/lumpy-skin-disease\)](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/lumpy-skin-disease)

[Center for Food Security & Public Health at Iowa State, College of Veterinary Medicine: Lumpy Skin Disease Technical Factsheet \(https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/lumpy_skin_disease.pdf\)](https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/lumpy_skin_disease.pdf)

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