

Peste des Petits Ruminants

What is peste des petits ruminants and what causes it?

Peste des petits ruminants, which is French for “disastrous disease of small ruminants”, is a highly contagious viral disease of sheep and goats. The virus is closely related to the rinderpest virus of cattle and causes very similar disease. The disease occurs in Africa, the Middle East and India. The virus has not been found in North America, so is referred to as a foreign animal disease.

What animals get peste des petits ruminants?

Peste des petits ruminants is primarily a disease of sheep and goats. Cattle and pigs can be infected, but do not show signs of disease. The disease has also been reported in some wild ungulates. The American white-tailed deer develops disease under experimental conditions.

How can my animal get peste des petits ruminants?

Peste des petits ruminants is mainly spread during close contact. Most infections occur when a susceptible animal inhales (**aerosol**) the virus from coughing and sneezing infected animals. The virus is in secretions from the eyes, nose, and mouth, and feces from infected animals. Transmission by **fomites** (e.g., water troughs, bedding) can also occur for a short time but objects do not remain infectious for long periods.

How does peste des petits ruminants affect my animal?

Most animals suffering from peste des petits ruminants develop a sudden high fever that generally lasts between five and eight days, after which time the animal either dies or begins to recover. Other signs of illness include restlessness, decreased appetite, discharge from the eyes and nose that often crusts over the nostrils making breathing difficult, and sores in the nose and mouth. Animals may also develop diarrhea leading to dehydration and extreme weight loss. Coughing can be seen later in the disease, as can abortion in pregnant animals. Death rates up to 90% can occur.

Can I get peste des petits ruminants?

No. Humans are not at risk of developing peste des petits ruminants.

Who should I contact, if I suspect peste des petits ruminants?

Contact your veterinarian immediately. Peste des petits ruminants is not currently found in the U.S.; suspicion of disease requires immediate attention.

How can I protect my animals from peste des petits ruminants?

Animals imported from countries where peste des petits ruminants exists must be carefully examined by veterinarians upon entry into the United States.

Any new animals entering the farm should be quarantined away from the rest of the herd until it is determined that they are healthy and there is no risk to the other animals on the farm.

The virus can survive in the environment for short periods of time, but can be destroyed by ultraviolet light and drying.

A vaccine is available for animals in regions where the disease is present.

Peste des Petits Ruminants
is a highly contagious viral disease of sheep and goats.



Photo: Goat with discharge from nose and eyes.
From www.defra.gov.uk.

For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets. Peste des petits ruminants at <http://www.cf-sph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/>

United States Animal Health Association (USAHA). Foreign Animal Diseases (the Grey Book) at <http://www.usaha.org/pubs/fad.pdf>