

CATTLE FEVER TICKS: Answers to Common Questions

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If cattle fever ticks are found on U.S. property, livestock, or wildlife, the property and animals will be quarantined and the animals treated to prevent the spread of Texas cattle fever.

In Texas, two agencies enforce state and federal laws concerning cattle fever ticks: the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Below are answers to common questions from livestock producers, property owners, and wildlife managers about cattle fever ticks.

Why should I be concerned about cattle fever ticks?

Cattle fever ticks carry the parasites that cause Texas cattle fever, a severe and often fatal disease in animals that have gone several generations without being exposed to it.

Researchers have found no vaccines or drugs to prevent or cure the disease. The only method known to prevent cattle fever is eradicating the ticks.



How do cattle fever ticks move from one place to another?

Infested animals spread the ticks as they graze. Ticks spread to new areas when the animals are moved.

Why are quarantines needed for cattle fever ticks?

Quarantines stop animal movement, enabling authorities to gauge the size and scale of the infestation.

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They will treat the animals to eliminate ticks and prevent further spread.



How do I know if the ticks on my animals are cattle fever ticks?

If you suspect that your animals have cattle fever ticks, contact your local TAHC regional office to have a laboratory identify specimens. TAHC inspections and identification are free.

How do I contact the Texas Animal Health Commission?

A map with information about TAHC regional offices is posted at https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_WhoWeAre.pdf. You may also call the 24-hour service line at (800) 550-8242.

If cattle fever ticks are found on my property, will it affect my neighbors?

Yes. Adjacent properties and cattle will be quarantined and the animals inspected regularly to make sure that the infestation is contained.

If I buy animals from an area with cattle fever ticks, am I subject to quarantine?

Yes. Your animals and property will be quarantined until it can be determined if cattle fever ticks have infested your property.

When does the quarantine end?

Quarantines are lifted when the regulatory agency determines that the conditions for quarantine no longer exist.

Could I eliminate these ticks by treating my pastures with pesticides?

No. There are no pesticides approved for treating pastures for cattle fever ticks.



What are the treatments for cattle under quarantine?

Cattle on infested premises must be treated on a specific schedule with products that have been evaluated and approved for cattle fever tick elimination. The TAHC or USDA will assess each situation and work with producers to develop an action plan.

Options:

- ▶ Treat all cattle with coumaphos at 14-day intervals for 6 to 9 months in a dipping vat or with a spray dip machine.
- ▶ Inject all cattle with doramectin at 25- to 28-day intervals for 6 to 9 months.
- ▶ Dip and inspect the cattle until no ticks are found in two consecutive treatments and inspections. Then vacate the pastures by moving the animals to a non-infested area. This process eliminates ticks by removing their food supply. Having wildlife on the property can complicate this option.

Could I prevent fever tick infestations by vaccinating my cattle?



No. No tick vaccines have been approved. Research on a tick vaccine is being conducted with special approvals and under strict oversight. Findings from this trial will help determine whether the vaccine can be used in the future.

Can cattle fever ticks infest wildlife?

Yes. Although the ticks prefer cattle, they can also infest white-tailed deer, nilgai antelope, and other wildlife species.

What is the treatment for wildlife in a quarantined area?

The TAHC or USDA must inspect and treat the heads, hides, and capes of harvested wildlife before they can be moved from the premises. A permit will be issued to allow tick-free animals to be moved off the property.

Treatment for wildlife on rangeland is limited. Options for white-tailed deer are corn treated with ivermectin and self-application devices coated with permethrin. If ivermectin is used, withdrawal periods must be observed before hunting season.



For more information

Texas Animal Health Commission

- ▶ **Regional offices:** https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_WhoWeAre.pdf
- ▶ **Publication:** Cattle Fever Ticks: Frequently Asked Questions https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_FeverTickFAQ.pdf
- ▶ **Publication:** Fever Tick Inspection, Treatment and Movement Requirements for Native and Exotic Wildlife From Premises Quarantined as Infested, Exposed, Adjacent or Check https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/feverticks-pests/TAHCBrochure_FeverTickWildlifeInspection.pdf



USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

- ▶ **Publication:** Controlling Cattle Fever Ticks https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/cattle_fever_ticks.pdf
- ▶ **Publication:** Pest Alert: Cattle Fever Ticks and Cattle Fever https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/tick/downloads/pest_alert.pdf

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