

Bovine brucellosis

Bovine brucellosis is a highly contagious disease caused by a bacteria called brucella abortus.

Bovine brucellosis is characterized by abortions in the herd but only during the first pregnancy and after that abortions do not occur. The disease is zoonotic hence can be transmitted to humans through drinking unpasteurized milk from cattle, or getting in touch with fluids or aborted material from an infected cow while assisting to give birth.

Signs of brucellosis

The most common sign of brucellosis is abortion usually from 5 to 6 months of pregnancy. Other signs include retained placenta, metritis and infertility in cows.

In bulls, it manifests as orchitis, epididymitis and chronically infected animals can show hygromas ie swelling of the testis.

Control of brucellosis

Unfortunately, the disease has no cure and control is through vaccination using S 19 or Albi 51 vaccines but do not vaccinate bulls and pregnant cows because vaccination can lead to infertility in bulls and abortion in pregnant cows. Both vaccines cause brucellosis in humans hence need to seek medical attention incase you accidentally inject your self with the vaccine.

Vaccination schedule

Using the Albi 51 vaccine, start by vaccinating your heifers which are 4 to 10 months old by injecting them with 2 ml of the vaccine subcutaneously. Revaccinate with a full doze when they are between 12 t 16 months old.

Adult cows which are not pregnant can also be vaccinated by administering 2ml subcutaneously.

Annual booster doses can be administered if required but its not a prerequisite. If you have abortions on your farm, always consult a vet and also wear protective clothing before you touch the abortus.