

**Extension Notes – Angie Johnson, NDSU Extension Agent Intern**  
**Anthrax in Livestock 7-11-14**

**Save the date! The Steele County Small Grains Plot Tour will be held Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at the plot.** The plot tour starts at 9AM and is located 1 ½ miles west of Hope on the south side of Highway 38. Guest speakers are NDSU Extension Agronomist Joel Ransom and Finley Farmers Grain Elevator Manager David Fiebiger. Joel will be discussing the barley and spring wheat varieties within the plot and David will be discussing grain marketing strategies. The Steele County Small Grains Plot Tour is sponsored by the Steele County Crop & Livestock Improvement Association and the Steele County Extension Service.

With the hot summer months of July and August here and with the late-spring wet weather we have been experiencing, it is time for livestock producers to be aware of the potential threat of anthrax. Anthrax is a zoonotic disease, which is a disease that can affect both humans and animals, and it is caused by the spores of the *Bacillus anthracis* organism. The spores of this organism can survive within the soil for decades, and this poses an issue when livestock, such as cattle, sheep, and horses, are grazing on neutral or slightly alkaline soils that have experienced heavy rainfall and flooding along with warm temperatures. These conditions allow the anthrax spores to be released and either ingested, inhaled, or introduced through an open wound/injury by the grazing animal. However, most anthrax infections in livestock are the result of grazing livestock on a previously anthrax infected pasture land.

Livestock in areas where anthrax has been found should be vaccinated prior to going out to pasture. Because immunity appears to decline after about six months, livestock need to be vaccinated for anthrax annually. Contact your local veterinarian to start the anthrax vaccination program within your herd or flock.

Signs of an anthrax infection depend on the species of animal infected and the route of infection. If the route of infection is the mouth or nose, signs of illness occur quickly and death follows rapidly. When an infection takes place within an open wound/injury, the wound site becomes hot and swollen, then cold and insensitive. Anthrax is usually a fatal disease with limited signs observed because of rapid organism formation, which makes treating infected animals difficult, especially if they are not treated within the early detection stage.

Listed are some signs that could indicate an anthrax infection:

- Sudden death
- Staggering
- Difficult breathing
- Fever
- Abortion
- Bloody discharge from mouth, nose, and anus

If anthrax is suspected, do not open up the carcass and perform a necropsy. Contact your local veterinarian immediately so that he or she can take in samples for further testing and diagnosis. Producers should take every precaution to avoid skin contact with the potentially contaminated carcass and soil to avoid any contact with the anthrax spores. If anthrax is confirmed by the diagnostic lab, the carcass and all materials associated with it must be destroyed by incineration.

For more information, please contact the Steele County Extension office by phone at 701-524-2253 or e-mail [angela.b.johnson@ndsu.edu](mailto:angela.b.johnson@ndsu.edu) or find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/steelecountyextension](http://www.facebook.com/steelecountyextension). NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.