

Unusual Mortality & Morbidity, Cause Unknown

DISEASE IN ANIMALS

Unusual disease outbreaks of unknown cause in animals should not be ignored. These cases can provide early warning of an emerging or reemerging disease, an environmental or product/feed contamination or toxin, a foreign animal disease or an intentional introduction of an infectious agent. Any of which could also be of public health concern.

Reporting: When domestic animals are involved, accredited veterinarians are required to report immediately by telephone to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), Division of Animal Industry at (614) 728-6220 or (800) 300-9755 or the USDA APHIS Veterinary Services at (614) 856-4735 or (800) 536-7593.

Wildlife morbidity and mortality can be voluntarily reported to the ODNR Division of Wildlife.

Clinical signs: Examples of clinical signs in animals include sudden unexplained death, neurologic or bleeding disorders, vesicular lesions, acute respiratory distress in multiple animals or animals that have had some shared exposure or link, or where humans may have also experienced illness.

Diagnosis: The diagnostic follow up to any unusual mortality or morbidity situation should always be done in labs authorized by the USDA and that are accredited by American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). A list of accredited labs can be found at <http://www.aavld.org>. The ODA Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is the only lab in Ohio accredited by the AAVLD and authorized by USDA to provide foreign animal disease diagnostic assays. See <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/addl/>.

DISEASE IN HUMANS

Reporting: Any unexpected pattern of cases, deaths or increased incidence of any other disease of major public health concern, because of the severity of disease or potential for epidemic spread, may indicate a newly recognized infectious agent, outbreak, epidemic, related public health hazard or act of bioterrorism. Therefore, unusual morbidity/mortality is listed as reportable in the Ohio Revised Code 3701-3-02 and must be reported immediately via telephone to the [local health department](#).

Human illness: Variable

Personal protection: When dealing with unknown disease agents, personal protection should be a first priority for the veterinarian and all animal handlers. Vector, contact and droplet precautions should be taken when handling ill and dead animals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Disease in Animals

[ODA Division of Animal Industry](#)

[USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Animal Diseases](#)

[OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests](#)

[The United States Animal Health Association Foreign Animal Diseases "The Gray Book"](#).

Disease in Humans

[ODH Infectious Disease Control Manual](#) (Zoonotic Disease Outbreak)

[CDC | Bioterrorism Agents/Diseases | Emergency Preparedness & Response](#)

[CIDRAP >> History, Likely Agents, Perpetrators, and Dissemination](#)

[Iowa State University Center for Food Security and Public Health: Zoonoses Resources](#)

[Iowa State University Center for Food Security and Public Health Animal Disease Factsheets](#)