

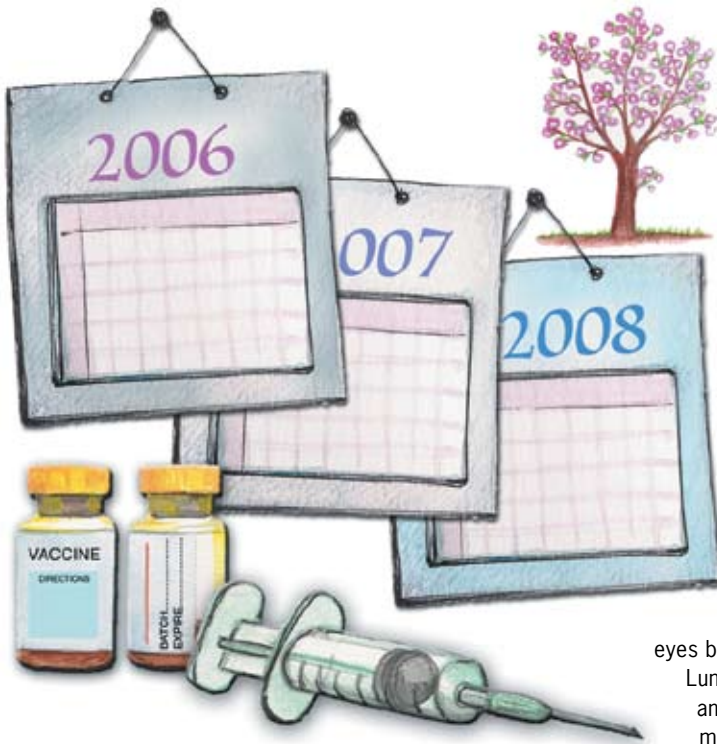
# Lumpy skin disease

by Dr JH du Preez

**Lumpy skin disease is a serious disease caused by a virus. It may be prevented and controlled by vaccinating your cattle yearly. When cattle are infected with the disease, they develop a fever and one can see lumps in their skin. Little sores develop on the inside of the mouth, nose, and on the sexual organs.**

In some cases the disease may spread fast and could affect the whole herd. The affected animals lose weight and their milk production drops drastically or stops. Pregnant cows abort and the skin is permanently damaged. Animals showing serious symptoms should be killed and buried because chances are good that they will never recover.

The virus is present in the saliva and skin lesions of the animals. When the animals are close together they rub up against each other and spread the disease. The disease can also be passed on to suckling calves through the milk. The disease usually spreads along roads and places where cattle often move.



Lumpy-skin disease is common in late summer and autumn, but there have been outbreaks reported during dry seasons too. The disease is quite common in animals grazing in low-lying, wet and muddy areas.

### Symptoms

Animals may show symptoms such as a heavy discharge from the nose, heavy saliva dripping from the mouth and they do not want to eat. The animal's eyes become red and swollen. Lumps are found in the skin and in the muscles. There may be a few to several hundred lumps.

Sometimes the bumps turn into dead skin dropping from the animal, leaving raw abscesses full of pus. Soft, yellow-grey sores can be seen inside the mouth, nose and air passages, upper stomach and sexual organs. Sometimes a swelling under the skin on the legs is wrongly seen as snakebite and could be lumpy skin disease. Swellings of legs can sometimes lead to lameness.

Usually one can see the lumps on the skin of an affected animal. In a laboratory a very powerful microscope, the electron microscope, is used to look at the samples taken of an affected area to confirm the presence of the virus.

### Prevention and control

Because insects play a very important role in spreading the virus, methods such as quarantine or preventing cattle moving from one area to another are not very successful. However, sick animals should be kept well apart from the rest of the herd and must not share drinking or feeding troughs. The virus also infects the semen of bulls.



Animals older than six months must be vaccinated against lumpy-skin disease during spring. It is safe to vaccinate pregnant cows. All animals must be vaccinated once a year. When vaccinating the animals during a disease-outbreak, it is important to use one needle per animal so that the virus is not spread from sick to healthy animals.



Make sure that the vaccine is not exposed to heat or direct sunlight as the ultra-violet rays will harm it.

### Treatment

Ask your veterinarian for help. Treatment is done according to the symptoms of the disease. Be sure to take good care of your animals. Because the defence system of the animal is not strong, antibiotics should be given to prevent further infections. It is very important to control the disease. By vaccinating the animal before it becomes infected with the disease, will assist in curbing serious disease outbreaks. **UM**

