



primefacts

FOR PROFITABLE, ADAPTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

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PRIMEFACT 401

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Anthrax vaccination in NSW

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See also:

- [Primefact 114 – 'Anthrax'](#)

Anthrax is an acute infectious bacterial disease affecting many species of domestic and wild animals, and humans. It is a serious disease of livestock because it can kill stock across all ages and classes and because it can survive in the soil for decades.

Anthrax is a notifiable disease under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*. If you believe anthrax is affecting your stock you have a legal responsibility to immediately notify an inspector authorised under the Act.

Further information on notifiable diseases is available in [Primefact 402 'Notifiable animal diseases in NSW'](#).

Is there a vaccine against anthrax?

A vaccine called 'Anthrax Vaccine (Living Spore Sterne Strain)' is imported into Australia by Pfizer Australia. It is available in NSW to help manage the risk of anthrax.

When should I use the vaccine?

During or following a case of anthrax you may be required, by an order under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*, to vaccinate your livestock. An inspector will discuss this with you.

In other circumstances you may choose to use the vaccine as a preventative measure, e.g. in a high risk enterprise such as a feedlot.

How do I access the vaccine?

Anthrax vaccine can only be supplied to persons, or their nominated veterinarian, who have been authorised to use it.

To obtain authorisation you need to complete and send in the form 'Application and Authority to use Anthrax Vaccine (Living Spore Sterne Strain) in NSW'.

This form is available from Industry & Investment NSW (I&I NSW), Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LHPA), or from www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Vaccine use in sheep, cattle and pigs can be authorised by an I&I NSW Regional Veterinary Officer (RVO) or Veterinary Officer (VO).

When you have completed the form you should fax it to the appropriate officer for authorisation (see contact details below).

Your District Veterinarian, private veterinarian or rural supplier can help you to complete the form and fax it to the authorising officer.

The authorising officer will normally fax the authorised form back to you. You can then send the form and an order to Pfizer Australia.

The company will dispatch the vaccine promptly to the account holder you have nominated – usually your local rural supplier or your private veterinarian.

Vaccine use in other species can only be authorised by the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) or a deputy CVO and the application will need supporting documentation. For assistance, contact your local LHPA District Veterinarian or an I&I NSW Regional Veterinary Officer or Veterinary Officer.

Note: Sometimes during an anthrax incident your veterinarian may recommend treatment of valuable animals with antibiotics. **Do not use antibiotics and vaccines at the same time**, because antibiotics interfere with the

development of immunity. Vaccinated animals that are treated with antibiotics should be revaccinated 10 days after the antibiotic treatment has stopped.

Giving the vaccine

Follow the manufacturer's directions closely, especially noting the following points:

- Vaccine is supplied in either a 10 mL or 50 mL glass vial.
- Store vaccine in a refrigerator and do not use it after the expiry date shown on the label.
- Shake the vial thoroughly, before and during use, so that the spores are suspended evenly throughout the contents.
- Keep the vial free from dust and flies while vaccinating.
- A sterile, disposable, bottle-mounted vaccination gun provides the most practical method of vaccine administration. A 1 mL vaccination gun is ideal: otherwise, calibrate the syringe to administer the very low dose rates necessary.
- Inject the vaccine under the skin (not into muscle). Suitable sites are the base of the ear for sheep and pigs, or the side of the neck for cattle. This minimises the risk of vaccination reactions, which are relatively common and can adversely affect carcass quality and compromise animal welfare.
- Burn empty and partly used vaccine vials, as the vaccine contains living spores.
- Do not use chemical disinfectants to sterilise vaccination equipment, as the disinfectant may react with the vaccine and stop it working. A pressure cooker is ideal for disinfection. Alternatively, the equipment can be boiled for 20 minutes.
- Avoid getting the vaccine on your bare skin, including in your eyes or mouth.

The withholding period from vaccination to slaughter is 42 days. There is no withholding period for milk which means you can continue to supply milk from vaccinated dairy cows.

Refer to the vaccine use instructions for further details.

Are there any restrictions on my livestock after vaccination?

Yes, there are two very important restrictions.

1. Stock vaccinated with an anthrax vaccine may not be moved, other than with an inspector's permit, within 42 days of vaccination.
2. There is a 42-day slaughter withholding period for stock vaccinated with an anthrax vaccine.

Immunity and revaccination

Full immunity takes up to 15 days to develop. On infected properties most deaths generally stop within 5 to 7 days after vaccination.

Annual vaccination for sheep and cattle is strongly recommended for at least three years following a case of anthrax, and property owners are encouraged to continue an annual preventative vaccination program. If young calves or lambs are vaccinated during an outbreak, they should always be revaccinated by 12 months of age, and ideally before the next high risk period.

Vaccinate all new animals born on or introduced to the property. Don't forget to vaccinate introduced bulls and rams as soon as they arrive.

When can I stop using the vaccine?

Anthrax occurs on properties when susceptible animals ingest resistant spores. The location of these resistant spores on a property is rarely known. So it is likely that, at some time in the future, more grazing animals will ingest the spores. If an animal has been vaccinated this ingestion does not result in anthrax. However once vaccination ceases the level of protective antibodies will drop in vaccinated stock, and both they and any new unvaccinated stock (born or introduced) will be at a high risk of developing anthrax.

Each new case of anthrax, if not detected and effectively decontaminated, will result in more spores contaminating the farm and the cycle will continue. The decision not to vaccinate or to cease vaccinating on any property with a history of anthrax can have consequences that last for decades. Hence farmers are advised to discuss with their veterinarian how to manage the risk of anthrax and the role of on-going vaccination.

Where can I get more information?

For further information contact your local LHPA District Veterinarian, or an I&I NSW veterinarian.

POSITION / Location	PHONE	MOBILE	FAX
RVO Broken Hill	08 8088 9336	0427 107 891	08 8087 8005
RVO Forbes	02 6850 2920	0407 276 941	02 6852 3998
RVO Menangle	02 4640 6378	0402 070 914	02 4640 6300
RVO Tamworth	02 6763 1103	0428 635 545	02 6763 1222
RVO Wollongbar	02 6626 1214	0409 390 402	02 6626 1202
VO Bourke	02 6872 2077	0429 773 021 0400 770 328	02 6872 3046
VO Dareton	03 5019 8411	0428 223 978	03 5027 4319
VO Goulburn	02 4828 6628	0427 311 434	02 4822 3261
VO Wagga	02 6938 1967	0429 446 557	02 6938 1995

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