

## WHAT TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR BISON WITH MCF?

### THERE IS NO TREATMENT OR VACCINE FOR MCF

## BE AWARE!

- Do not graze sheep, particularly lambs 5-9 months old, with bison
- Keep sheep as far away from bison as possible
- OvHV-2 is fragile in the environment, surviving for only a few days depending on the humidity and temperature, so sheep and bison can graze the same pastures but over separate seasons
- Ensure transport haulers have not recently transported sheep

IF YOU CAN SEE BISON FROM THE SHEEP PASTURE THEN THEY MAY BE TOO CLOSE!



## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Contact your herd health veterinarian to discuss disease control and prevention strategies, and visit:

### BISON PRODUCERS OF ALBERTA

www.bisoncentre.com  
Email: info@bisoncentre.com  
Phone: 780.955.1995

### ALBERTA LAMB PRODUCERS

www.ablamb.ca  
Email: info@ablamb.ca  
Phone: 403.948.8533

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Canada



Government of Alberta



# MALIGNANT CATARRHAL FEVER

## WHAT IS MALIGNANT CATARRHAL FEVER?

Commonly called MCF, Malignant Catarrhal Fever is an infectious disease affecting certain ruminants, particularly bison, and is **caused most commonly by sheep (ovine) herpes virus-2 (OvHV-2).**

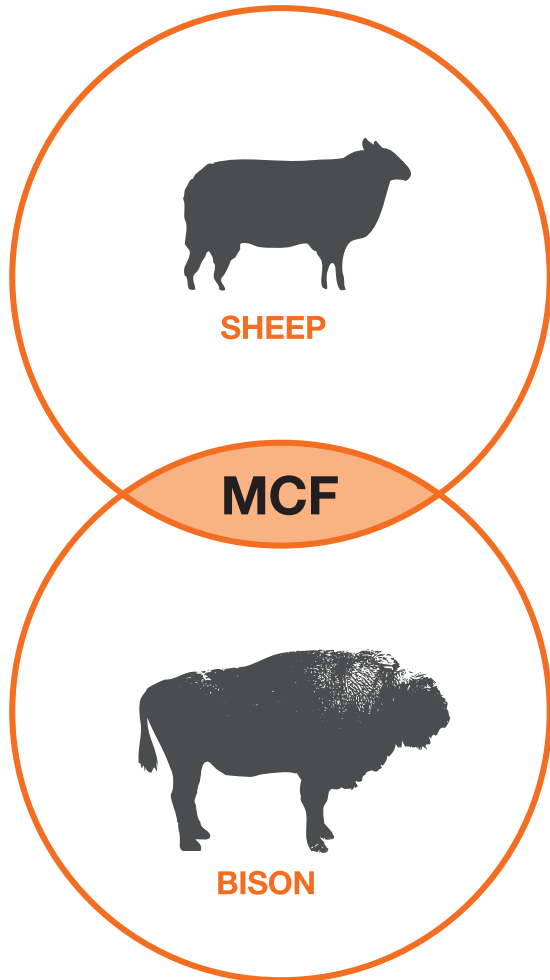
It does not affect people.



BISON PRODUCERS OF ALBERTA

## WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MALIGNANT CATARRHAL FEVER?

MCF infection results in the death of all infected bison. Losses of up to 50% of some bison herds have been reported, economically devastating those bison producers.



LAMBS, 5-9 MONTHS OLD PRESENT THE GREATEST RISK OF DISEASE TRANSMISSION, ESPECIALLY IN HIGH NUMBERS

## WHAT DOES MCF LOOK LIKE?

The incubation period for MCF varies widely. In bison, it is often a month or more, but is shortened by stress, such as handling.

Signs of disease last 1-7 days and usually result in death. Sheep display no signs of infection or disease.

## HOW IS MCF SPREAD?

### AMONG SHEEP

- Can be passed by direct contact, thru the air to herd mates or neighboring animals
- Almost all sheep are carriers of OvHV-2, but are otherwise healthy
- OvHV-2 is spread by nasal secretions of lambs and occasionally adult sheep
- Lambs, 5-9 months old, are the greatest risk of passing the virus, especially in large numbers

### FROM SHEEP TO BISON

- May be passed by direct contact, thru the air or on equipment that has been in contact with infected or virus carrying sheep. E.g. transport trucks
- Transmission over several kilometers has been observed, depending on prevailing wind conditions, humidity, temperature, sheep density
- Malignant Catarrhal Fever virus may lay dormant in some bison and become an active disease later, which may be brought on by stress
- A bison with MCF will not transmit the disease to other bison; they are a dead end host



SIGNS OF DISEASE ARE OFTEN SUBTLE IN BISON, AS THEY TRY TO MASK THE CLINICAL SIGNS UNTIL NEAR DEATH. TRAUMA CAN RESULT FROM ATTACK BY HERDMATES.

## MCF IN BISON IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- Sudden death
- Fever, depression, weakness, off feed
- Nasal discharge
- Clouding and or ulceration of the eyes
- Respiratory problems such as coughing, shortness of breath, open mouth breathing
- Erosions in the mouth and upper respiratory tract
- Diarrhea or dysentery (bloody diarrhea), in some cases
- Followed by death of the affected bison



Cloudy Eye



MCF Calf

## HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian may diagnose Malignant Catarrhal Fever either:

- 1 With a blood test to detect the OvHV-2 virus; a technique called PCR testing or,
- 2 By examining a recently deceased animal and sending samples for further microscopic evaluation. Samples may include from the intestine, stomach, upper respiratory tract, lymph nodes or oral mucosal tissue