

Q FEVER

INFORMATION FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Q Fever is a bacterial infection that can cause a severe flu-like illness. For some people, Q Fever can affect their health and ability to work for many years. The bacteria are spread to humans from animals, mainly cattle, sheep and goats. Even people who do not have contact with animals may be infected. A safe and effective vaccine is available from your GP to protect people who are at risk. Screening is required to identify who can be vaccinated.

WHAT ARE COMMON Q FEVER SYMPTOMS?

You may experience:



- High Temperatures



- Severe Headaches



- Fatigue



- Muscle and joint pain



- Drenching sweats

HOW IS Q FEVER SPREAD?

- Breathing in air or dust contaminated by Q Fever bacteria from infected animal fluids and excretions.
- Drinking unpasteurised milk from infected cows, sheep and goats.
- Working with infected cattle, sheep and goats.
- Direct contact with infected animal tissue or fluids on broken skin (e.g. cuts or needlestick injuries when working with infected animals).

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

- Farm workers, Stock and Station Agents
- Livestock transporters
- Abattoir Workers
- Shearers and wool sorters
- Family members of those working in high risk jobs as above

HOW IS Q FEVER PREVENTED?



Vaccination from your GP is the best way to prevent Q Fever infection.

Wear personal protective clothing and a properly fitted mask when working with or disposing of animal products. Wash hands and arms with soapy water, after handling animal products and contaminated materials.

SICK ANIMALS

Animals that are infected usually do not appear to be sick. A sharp increase in the number of miscarriages and stillbirths in your animals may be a sign that Q Fever is on your farm. Contact your vet if your flock or herd is experiencing fertility problems.

