

# Ontario Department of Agriculture

## ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE

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# Contagious Abortion in Cattle

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This bulletin on Contagious Abortion in Cattle has been prepared to meet a popular demand and to furnish such information regarding this disease as may seem justified. It is hoped that it may prove useful to veterinary surgeons as well as to owners of breeding cattle. In its preparation the use of technical terms has been avoided where possible. Articles on abortion by various authorities have been freely consulted and drawn upon, of which due acknowledgement is hereby made. Among the writings referred to are those of McFadyen and Stockman, of Great Britain; Williams, Mohler, Eichhorn, Schroeder, Cotton and Giltner, of the United States.

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### NATURE AND CAUSE OF THE DISEASE.

The condition known as abortion, or "slinking the calf," is one which is often encountered among pregnant cattle. Its occurrence is increasing, and is becoming more acutely felt by many breeders, by noticeably lessening the productiveness of their herds. It has commonly been ascribed to result from a variety of causes, such as errors in feeding and watering, accidents and injuries of all kinds, influences of the weather, and also to supposed defects in the male parent.

While abortion, no doubt, may result in some cases from such causes, nevertheless they account for only a very small percentage of the cases in cattle, the larger percentage resulting from a COMMUNICABLE DISEASE, which is termed CONTAGIOUS ABORTION.

This disease may be described as a contagious affection of cattle, which is manifested by the premature expulsion of the fetus, or untimely delivery of the calf, owing to an infectious catarrh, or inflammation, set up in the womb. The cause of this has been shown to be a germ known as the *Bacillus abortus*, or Bang's Bacillus of Cattle Abortion.

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### METHODS OF CONTRACTING THE DISEASE.

The disease is generally first introduced into a healthy herd through obtaining breeding cattle from a diseased herd, thus constituting a carrier medium of infection from one herd to another. The manner in which cattle contract the disease or infect each other has been a matter of some dispute. Somewhat extensive investigations have been conducted in Great Britain and America, and the conclusions would seem to warrant the recognition of two channels, by either of which the disease germs may enter the system and reach the womb. One means of entrance is by the mouth with infected feed, water, and milk, and the other by the genital passage.