

# ALERT!



## Asian Longhorned Tick, (*H. longicornis*) in Cattle

An Emerging Risk

**The Asian longhorned tick (ALT)** has been implicated in an Emerging Risk Notice by USDA APHIS in cattle infections of *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda. ALT is the vector that spreads *T. orientalis* Ikeda via an infected tick bite of the cattle host. ALT has been identified in 16 states. In Kentucky ALT has been detected in Boone, Breathitt, Floyd, Madison, Martin, Metcalfe, and Perry counties.

**BELOW:** Asian longhorned ticks are light brown in color and are very small, often smaller than a sesame seed. They are difficult to detect, given their small size and quick movement. In fact, the adult female is only about the size of a pea when it is full of blood.

**PHOTO CREDITS:** CDC and Michael Greenwood



### WHAT ARE THE HOSTS FOR ALT?

The ALT requires warm-blooded animals including humans, wildlife, and domestic animals to feed on for survival. A male tick is not needed for reproduction. A female can produce 1,000-2,000 offspring without mating. A single animal may become host to thousands of tick offspring exacerbating the severity of anemia and increasing the risk of disease transmission. The tick may also live for extended periods (overwinter) in the environment (grass/woods) harboring infectious diseases, such as *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda.



### WHAT DISEASES CAN ALT SPREAD?

ALT was discovered in the United States in 2013. It is known to be the tickborne vector for reportable cattle diseases theileriosis and babesiosis and the human disease Rocky Mountain spotted fever. While *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda infections are not reportable, they are noted to be an emerging threat with the potential to cause significant economic losses to the cattle industry.

### HOW IS THE ALT IDENTIFIED?

Laboratory identification is the best way to confirm the identity of ALT. The ticks are light brown in color and often smaller than a sesame seed. The adult female is about the size of a pea when it is full of blood. Males are rare and not needed for reproduction. It only takes a single tick to introduce a new infection.



**The University of Kentucky Entomology Department has a laboratory that can identify ticks. For information on submitting a tick for lab assessment scan this QR code with the camera of your smart device or go to:**

[entomology.ca.uky.edu/ticksurveillance2022](http://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ticksurveillance2022)

### HOW CAN THE ALT BE CONTROLLED?

Control should be considered from both the animal and the environmental perspectives. There are no known acaricides labeled for use against the ALT. The use of pesticide impregnated ear tags, pour-ons, sprays, and back rubs should be beneficial in control of the tick. Employment of more than one method will yield better control results.

Keeping pasture mowed short may help control the population, as long grass will enhance tick survival. Perimeter fencing of a minimum of 20 feet from wooded areas will reduce the number of ticks on the grazing area. Routinely inspect livestock, pets, and humans for ticks. Keep in mind that wildlife can serve as tick hosts and accelerate their spread. Utilize your veterinarian and laboratory resources for tick collection and identification.



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