

What cattle producers need to know about Alpha-gal Syndrome

Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening food allergy. In the United States, the condition most often begins with the bite of the **lone star tick** and causes **mild to intense allergies to red meat**.

Cattle farmers and ranchers have a heightened risk of developing AGS because of increased time spent outdoors, including walking through thick grass, interacting with livestock and spending time in densely wooded areas where ticks live.



WHAT IS ALPHA-GAL?

Alpha-gal is a molecule found in most mammals, such as cows and pigs, and in the saliva of some ticks. When a tick bites, it can transfer alpha-gal from its saliva into a person's blood.

For some people, the immune system responds to alpha-gal and produces antibodies. These antibodies can cause an allergic reaction the next time the person is exposed to alpha-gal by eating foods. This reaction is Alpha-gal Syndrome.

Foods that can cause an AGS reaction



BEEF



PORK



LAMB



VENISON

Alpha-gal may also be found in **dairy products**, **gelatin** made from beef or pork, **meat broth** and **mammal fat**, like lard, tallow or suet.

SYMPTOMS OF AGS

Not every person bitten by a lone star tick will develop AGS, and it can take weeks to months for a person to have symptoms after being bitten. Once a person has AGS, symptoms commonly appear 2-6 hours after contact with products containing alpha-gal.

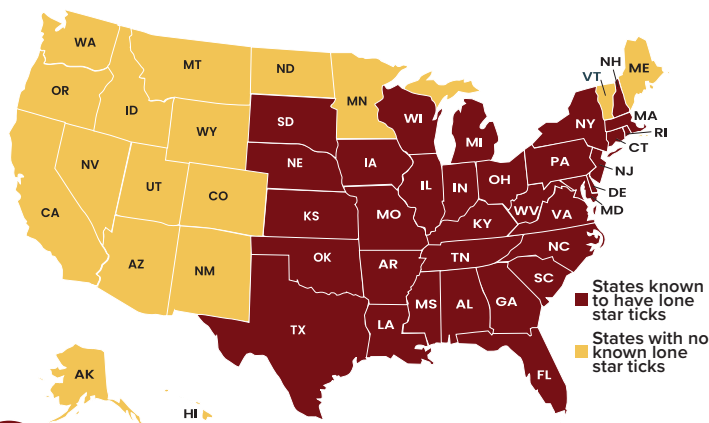
AGS symptoms can include

- Hives or itchy rash
- Swelling of the lips, throat, tongue or eyelids
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Dizziness, faintness or drop in blood pressure
- A combination of symptoms referred to as anaphylaxis

HOW DO I PREVENT AGS?

- The best way to protect yourself and your family from AGS is to prevent tick bites.
- In the United States, the lone star tick is most often associated with AGS.
- Although less common, AGS can occur following bites from other species, including the black-legged (deer) tick and the western blacklegged tick.

States with established lone star tick populations



Before you go outdoors

- ✓ Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Follow all product instructions.
- ✓ Avoid contact with ticks. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass.
- ✓ Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent. Follow all product instructions.

After you come indoors

- ✓ Examine clothing and pets for ticks.
- ✓ Shower and perform a thorough tick check. If you find a tick, remove it as soon as possible and thoroughly clean the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

If you have symptoms of AGS, see a healthcare provider and tell them you had a recent tick bite.

Sources:

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