



Psoroptic mange mite

Psoroptes spp.

Description: females up to 1/40 inch long, whitish oval mites with eight well-developed legs the front two pair of which are about twice as thick as the last two pairs.

Domestic animals affected: Different species and subspecies of psoroptic mites parasitize cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and rabbits; not swine, fowl, dogs or cats; but related mites of other genera may infest dogs and cats.

Damage caused: Infested skin becomes irritated, exudes serum which forms crusts and scabs that provide food and shelter for greater numbers of mites. Large, raw patches of skin occur and lose hair or wool. This is compounded by itching and the host's scratching and rubbing to gain relief. Skin functions for temperature regulation and protection from microbial infection are compromised. Severe morbidity results, sometimes mortality.

Development: gradual metamorphosis: egg, 6-legged protonymph, 8- legged deutonymph, adult.

Generational time: probably 10 to 14 days.

Oviposition site: on the skin surface, usually in the depression of a hair follicle; in more advanced lesions, nearly anywhere on or under a scab or crust of dried serum.

Nymphal habitat, feeding: same as for the adults.

Adult habitat, feeding: Their entire life is spent on the host, in incipient infestations, mites live near the bases of host hairs where they pierce the skin, causing inflammation and host response leading to the exudation of serum, formation of scabs and crusts, much itching, and raw, open skin wounds. Psoroptic scabies is debilitating in nearly all host species.

Method of dispersal or infestation: primarily by host-to-host contact; also via bedding, grooming tools, saddle blankets, or transportation vehicles that have been exposed to infested animals *of the same species*. Additional dispersal is by host mobility and transportation of infested hosts.

Seasonality: Sunshine, short hair coat, self grooming diminish transfer and establishment of infestations during late spring through autumn. Most damage occurs early winter through spring.

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