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Wooden Tongue (Actinobacillosis)

This condition of the tongue is caused by a bacteria known as *Actinobacillus lignieresii* (Gram-negative aerobic coccobacillus) which is an obligate inhabitant of the mouth of cattle.

The classic presentation is granuloma of the tongue causing pain and difficulty in swallowing, resulting in dysphagia (having trouble to swallow), salivation and submandibular swelling. Affected cattle lose weight rapidly.

Infection probably occurs through traumatic injuries to the tongue and mouth.

More rarely the bacteria can affect the oesophageal groove and cardia of the rumen which can result in chronic bloat.

Some cattle develop a skin form of the condition. Which may first appear as an abscess, but then develops into a pink-fleshy mass and bleeds easily.

Treatment consists of:

- Sodium iodide diluted and given under the skin or intravenously
- Anti-inflammatories
- Antibiotic course

The affected animal should have their appetite return to normal within 48 hours of treatment. Rarely, some animals need a repeat course to fully resolve the infection.