

Facial Eczema - Clinical Signs

The most common clinical sign of FE is photosensitisation. This is seen as shade seeking, reddened udder and teats, skin irritation, and in the worst cases loss of skin from white or hairless areas. The photosensitisation results because the damaged liver cannot rid the body of wastes, in particular a breakdown product of chlorophyll. This builds up in the blood and tissues and reacts with sunlight, causing the inflammation of the skin. However, not every animal becomes photosensitive. It is estimated that for every clinical case seen, there are 8-10 sub-clinically affected animals. Other signs of the disease include ill-thrift, weight loss, loss of production, constipation or diarrhoea, swollen legs, milk fever, low body condition or poor growth rates in young stock, dehydration, jaundice, blood in the urine, and occasionally sudden death.

