

## Zoonoses; The Beef and Bovine Tuberculosis

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It shouldn't be new to us that the meat from cattle is called BEEF, however if it's your first time of coming across this word, never mind, there is no BEEF between us.

It is believed that in West Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of cattle herds. Little wonder the most common meat available and consumed in the country is beef (yes, the cow meat).

Let me share with you a short story of a butcher..

Mr Alex worked in one of the slaughter houses in the country. A good looking young man with lots of swags.

You could see him with those fierce looking machetes and knives in the day time but at night he'd transform to a ladies guy (like Transformer's Optimus prime..).

Strangely something happened; he started having slight coughs amongst other funny signs.

Before these funny signs presented, everything seemed perfect with him and his trade.

However, the only downside to his almost perfect lifestyle was that; during the process of flaying and beef dissections he was quite fond of constantly cutting some raw meat and feeding his hungry throat and stomach..

Who really does that ???...

Well only Mr Alex the butcher..

Omar and some of his well-known and loyal customers would come request for a certain part of the meat with white nodules. With smiles on his face he'd gladly sell and pocket the money from sales.

The cough grew severe as days passed and yes you guessed right....

Tuberculosis already caught up with him.

But how?... you may want to know right?

### What is bovine tuberculosis?

Unlike the popular tuberculosis in humans caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, there is a form of tuberculosis found in cattle, caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* and both affects primarily the lungs and airways.

### Now you are wondering, tuberculosis in cow

Oh yes; I kid you not.

They do fall under a group of diseases called zoonotic diseases. (Let us forget the big grammar, it means a group of diseases that can move from animals to humans) and they can cause serious conditions in humans.

Bovine TB bacteria can also infect humans and cause tuberculosis, although this is reported to be mainly through people consuming unpasteurized milk or dairy products (pasteurization kills the *Mycobacterium bovis* bacteria).

Infection can also occur in people who come into close enough contact with infected animals by inhaling the bacteria-containing aerosol droplets, exhaled by them.

Humans can also be infected via direct contact with a wound, such as cuts gotten in the process of meat preparation for the final consumer.

Undercooked meat shouldn't be left out, as they could be culprits as well. For example the yummy asun, kilishi and even not cooking your meat properly at home could be predisposing factors.

How do you then identify this type of meat in other to avoid them?

When you see whitish nodules around the meat or meat parts and when you cut them it gives this gritty sound...dear readers you have most likely come across tubercles. Please steer clear of this meat parts.

When seen around the lungs of slaughtered cow, they are sometimes referred to as "fuku elegusi" (melon lungs).

According to [tbfacts.org](http://tbfacts.org); Some people say that the symptoms of bovine TB are different compared to the normal symptoms of TB in humans.

It is said that young children infected with *M. bovis* typically have abdominal infections and older patients have swollen and sometimes ulcerated lymph glands in the neck while other sources say that the symptoms of *M. bovis* in people are similar to the symptoms of TB caused by *M. tuberculosis*.

However notable symptoms include:

- Fever
- Night sweats
- Persistent cough
- Diarrhoea
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain.

If you begin to have persistent cough for weeks or you notice a tinge of blood when you cough; Please it's important to report to your hospital.

Bitter Kola and sweets (TomTom) with hot gin isn't a cure for tuberculosis, either the bovine or human forms.

Remember to always watch out for the meat you buy from the meat shops or put inside of your mouth and if you find yourselves around livestock especially cattle with constant coughing, please do take necessary precautions.

Report to your veterinarian and/or visit a doctor.

Stay safe!!!

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