



Get involved!

Complete the Pet Survey at www.FireAntEye.org.

Volunteer to help. And please donate to our research fund! Donations are tax-deductible.

Join our Facebook group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FireAntEye/>

Action Plan

- **Get official recognition that we have an eye disease epidemic.**
- **Do survey of pet owners and veterinarians to see extent of this epidemic.**
- **Seek donations and other funding to pay for the needed research to get a better diagnosis of this disease, identify the cause, isolate any pathogen involved, and develop new treatments.**
- **Work with local veterinarians to assess the effectiveness and safety of currently available treatment options.**
- **Encourage the control of the Little Fire Ant.**

About the Good Shepherd Foundation

We are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization founded in 1949 and dedicated to human, animal, and environmental health. Sydney Ross Singer and Soma Grismaijer recently were awarded a Hawaii County Council *Certificate of Exceptional Community Service* for their "Help Puna" efforts during the lava flow in helping evacuate pets and farm animals. The Good Shepherd Foundation is spearheading the "Fire Ant" Eye campaign.

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"Fire Ant" Eye

Search for the Cause and the Treatment

A program of the Good Shepherd Foundation

What is "Fire Ant" Eye?

"Fire Ant" Eye is a type of keratopathy that causes cloudiness in the cornea of the eyes. It can happen in one or both eyes. There is no apparent pain or inflammation of the eye. It begins as white spots and these can widen and spread to cover the entire cornea, resulting in partial to total blindness. It affects mostly cats and dogs, but can affect horses and birds, as well. We call it "Fire Ant" Eye because it occurs in areas where the Little Fire Ant (LFA) has invaded, and the LFA seem to be a trigger for the disease, although this is controversial.



How many animals are being affected by this?

It's epidemic in Puna, with over **50%** of the cats and dogs affected. This is a recent epidemic, which means something new has happened over the past 15 years. (LFA?)

Is it caused by the LFA?

Some vets think it is caused by LFA stings, but other vets disagree, since there is no eye inflammation, which would be expected from fire ant stings. However, the sting may allow a secondary infection to set in, which may cause the cloudiness.

Is it an infection?

Some research suggests an infection of the corneal stroma by a slow growing pathogen, either a fungus, virus, or bacteria. The LFA may be a carrier or vector for the pathogen. Or the pathogen may be part of the environment. So far, no specific pathogen has been identified, and some vets question whether there is a pathogen since there is no inflammation, such as redness, swelling, pus, or other signs of infection. The only thing abnormal with these eyes is the cloudiness. It could be an immune reaction. Nobody really knows.



Little Fire Ants (Image courtesy CTAHR)

Is there a treatment or cure for the cloudiness?

So far, vets have tried using some antibiotics, anti-fungals, anti-virals, and anti-inflammatories, and nothing has worked. The cloudiness may get worse, or stay the same, but the pet has it for life if there are no new treatments discovered.

Should I just try different things in my pet's eyes by myself?

No. Do not do anything to your pet's eyes without veterinary supervision. Many home remedies can make things worse and cause harmful side effects.



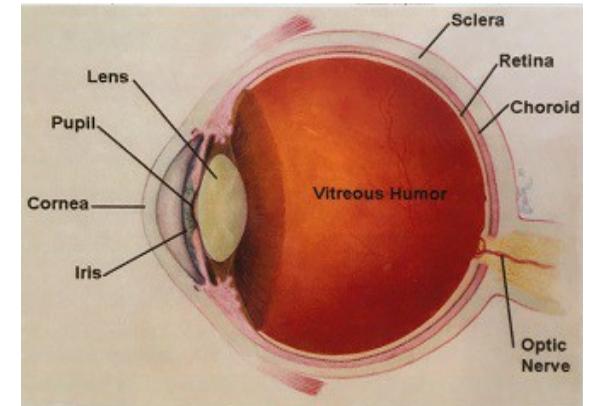
What is the plan to discover the cure?

If a pathogen or other disease process is discovered, veterinarians can conduct clinical trials to find a treatment or cure. In the meantime, there may be some veterinary approved treatments that local vets can try to help reduce the cloudiness in the cornea.



What is the plan to discover the cause?

We are working with the Comparative Ocular Pathology Lab of Wisconsin (COFLOW), a world-renown veterinary eye pathology lab, to look at eye samples and give a diagnosis. We then need to culture the eyes to see if we can find any pathogen.



What can I do to prevent this eye disease in my pets?

Indoor pets have a lower incidence of "Fire Ant" Eye than outdoor pets, so keeping cats inside can help.

Don't leave food out for pets, or, if you do, put the food bowl in a tray of slightly soapy water.

And treat for LFA, which is a good idea even if it doesn't stop the eye disease.