

The Ontario Animal Health Network is a program focusing on early disease detection so as to identify trends in animal health issues. Information was obtained from a quarterly survey of practicing veterinarians and laboratory data from the Animal Health Laboratory. It is the intent of this program to improve the health of small ruminants in Ontario.



Ontario Animal Health Network (OAHN) Small Ruminant Network Quarterly Producer Report

February 2016

Report #7

Highlights

- Cache Valley Virus
- Q4 Surveillance Summary
- Importance of Colostrum
- Diarrhea in goat kids
 - *Cryptosporidium* spp.
- Thank you to Dr. Amy Gaw

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@OntAnHealthNet

Email

oahn@uoguelph.ca

Cache Valley Virus detected in Q4

During the latter half of December 2015 and the start of 2016, the AHL received several submissions of stillborn and aborted lambs with unusual and severe birth defects. On January 14, 2016, test results came back positive for Cache Valley virus (CVV). CVV was previously detected in Ontario flocks in 2011 and 2012.

CVV is a mosquito borne virus that causes developmental damage to the fetus's central nervous system and musculoskeletal system when the pregnant ewe is infected before 48 days of gestation. While we have known that CVV infection is endemic across North America, the scope of this outbreak is unexpected and larger than previously recorded. A survey of sheep producers is currently underway to describe the scope of the outbreak and some of the possible differences between flocks that were affected and those that were not. Goat fetuses may also be affected by CVV but to-date, no affected goat kids have been reported in Ontario.

Producers in Quebec have not seen an increase in lamb deformities. This may be reflective of the large number of flocks that are housed indoors all year round in Quebec.

For more information on CVV, [click here](#).

Q4 Surveillance Summary

Clinical Impressions Survey

In young stock, practitioners surveyed indicated that the top clinical issues for the quarter dealt with: **lambing and kidding (stillbirths, congenital defects, born weak), pneumonia, and coccidiosis**. Lambs and kids were affected equally.

The main clinical findings for adult sheep and goats were: **neurologic disease (listeriosis, polioencephalomalacia), caseous lymphadenitis, and abortions**.

AHL Data

There was an increase in caprine arthritis encephalitis (CAE) testing. Based on AHL data, testing has steadily increased from Q4 of 2014. This is indicative of the goat industry's desire to decrease the prevalence of CAE in Ontario herds.



OAHN Small Ruminant Network Team:

Southern ON
Dr. Rex Crawford

Northern ON
Dr. Amy Gaw

Eastern ON
Dr. John Hancock

OVC
Dr. Paula Menzies

AHL
Dr. Maria Spinato

OMAFRA
Dr. Jocelyn Jansen
Dr. Tim Pasma
Dr. Alexandra Reid

OAHN Coordinator
Dr. Melanie Barham

The Importance of Colostrum for a Healthy Start

In ruminants, antibodies do not cross the placenta. Therefore it is important that newborns receive colostrum as soon as possible after being born. Lambs and kids not receiving colostrum in the first hours of life are more susceptible to diseases. Hypothermia (chilling) can also affect a newborn's ability to take in colostrum. To ensure lambs/kids consume enough antibodies, colostrum should be fed with the following guidelines:

- 50 mL/kg body weight (5% of body weight) at the first feeding, with the first feeding ideally occurring in the first hour after birth.
- An additional 200 mL/kg (20% of body weight) should be fed over 3 additional feedings within the first 24 hours of life.
- A blood test can be used to determine the amount of antibodies a lamb/kid has absorbed.
- If lamb or kid disease levels and/or death losses are high in a flock/herd, consider investigating colostrum quality, collection, heat treatment, cooling, and storage, as well as the volume fed.
- Colostrum replacement products may be used in place of natural colostrum if adequate amounts are ingested. However, these products are of bovine origin, which may impact the ability of the antibodies to fight sheep/goat specific diseases on your farm.
- As always, consult with your veterinarian to make a comprehensive plan tailored for your farm.

Diarrhea in Goat Kids

Cryptosporidium

Cryptosporidium parvum is a protozoan parasite that causes diarrhea in kids as young as 4 days old, and often in the 1-2 week age range. Diarrhea ranges from soft to watery, is commonly yellow, and generally has a foul odour. The severity of disease depends on the initial infective dose, the immune and nutritional status of the kid, and co-infection with other diseases.

Removal of cryptosporidia from the environment is very difficult. Chlorine dioxide at 100 mg/L concentration (Dutrition tablets) is one of the best disinfectants against cryptosporidia. Cleaning both kidding pens and areas where neonates are housed is important to reducing the environmental burden.

Thank you to Dr. Amy Gaw

The OAHN Small Ruminant Network would like to thank Dr. Amy Gaw for her participation in the network. Amy has represented northern Ontario practitioners since the fall of 2014.

