



*The WeCAHN smallholders network met 15th March 2024 with veterinary practitioners, producers, provincial veterinarians, diagnosticians, and researchers in attendance.*

## Report Contents:

- i. Network practitioners' clinical impressions survey.
- ii. Laboratory data identifiable as originating from small-scale production.
- iii. Scan of other surveillance networks.

## Review of data

### i. Small ruminants:

Network veterinarians complete a quarterly survey describing the diseases they have diagnosed during the three month period under discussion.

For purposes of the network veterinarians' clinical impressions surveys, Rarely = 1-2 times from July - September 2023; Commonly = 1-2 times per month; Very frequently = 3+ times per month.

### Clinical Impressions Survey (CIS) small ruminant findings:

- Coccidiosis, haemonchosis, were all described as seen Rarely by one network practitioner, and rated as stable to decreasing.

Case report: UCVM: Nubian buck with history of diarrhea and weight loss.

7 month old buck in a flock of 10, with one breeding buck

Whole carcass submitted to UCVM DSU

Diagnoses: coccidiosis and emaciation.

**Coccidiosis is a commonly seen infection with a single-celled parasite, causing diarrhea and weight loss.**

**REFERENCE: Handbook for 5-Star Worm Program (for parasite control) <https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-tools/wecahn-information-library/Handbook-for-5-star-worm-program>**

## Trends and issues discussed at WeCAHN commercial small ruminant network meeting:

### i. Lambs with "funny legs and neuro signs"

- One practitioner reported increase in joint problems and other congenital defects.
- Discussion was largely around Cache Valley virus (CVV), a potential cause of abortions and birth defects including these joint abnormalities.

**REFERENCE ON CVV: <https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-tools/wecahn-information-library/Cache-Valley-virus-in-sheep-and-goats>**

**ii. Listeriosis:** the case of a commercial flock 7 month feeder lamb with signs of circling and falling to one side, which was butchered, with head ONLY submitted to lab, was presented.

Diagnosis: Blood poisoning and brain damage caused by Listeria bacteria. This bacteria, often associated with silage feeding in sheep and goats, can also cause human illness.

**REFERENCE: Listeriosis in Sheep. Factsheet. [https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-tools/wecahn-information-library/Listeriosis\\_in\\_Sheep](https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-tools/wecahn-information-library/Listeriosis_in_Sheep)**



ii. **Body condition scoring (BCS) was discussed at the commercial small ruminants network meeting.**

**QUESTION: ARE PRODUCERS AWARE OF THEIR ANIMALS' CONDITION?**

ANSWER: with our small ruminant smallholder clients, depends which level you are thinking of:

- Flock: not so much and we tend to see extremes both skinny and overweight consistently across a flock, either all overweight or all underweight.
- One individual: clients will notice one unusual individual [with respect to body condition] more often.

**BODY CONDITION SCORING REFERENCES:**

“What’s the score? Sheep body condition scoring guide” Available at: [https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex9622/\\$FILE/bcs-sheep.pdf](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex9622/$FILE/bcs-sheep.pdf)

“Body Condition Scoring For Sows”. Canadian Pork Council Available at: <https://www.cpc-ccp.com/uploads/userfiles/files/ACA-Appendix-10.pdf>

“Chicken Handling”. University of Bristol. Available at: [https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/vetscience/documents/clinical-skills/Chicken\\_Handling.pdhhf](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/vetscience/documents/clinical-skills/Chicken_Handling.pdhhf)

**Influenza A in dairy cattle and other mammals as of 5th April 2024**

Since March, dairy cattle have been reported infected with Influenza A virus in Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Michigan, Ohio, and Idaho.

For more information: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock>

A person in the United States has tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) virus (“H5N1 bird flu”), as reported by Texas and confirmed by CDC. This person had exposure to dairy cattle in Texas presumed to be infected with HPAI A(H5N1) viruses. The patient reported eye redness (consistent with conjunctivitis), as their only symptom, and is recovering. For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/p0401-avian-flu.html>

**Meeting takeaways**

Addressing animal health problems requiring identifying them. Including condition scoring in your farm management give you powerful information for early detection of disease.

The case of the feeder lamb with clinical Listeriosis which was butchered resulted in a discussion at the WeCAHN small ruminants network which included the basic guideline: don’t eat sick stuff.

While to date (8<sup>th</sup> April 2024) no cases of Influenza A have been reported in Canadian sheep, goats, or cats, the spring migration poses an increased risk of viral transmission. It’s reasonable to watch for signs of milk drying up/udder infections/sharp decline in milk production in their cows, or neurological disease in neonatal goats., and call your veterinarian if you see either of these problems.