



The WeCAHN smallholders network met 12th Dec. 2023 with veterinary practitioners, producers, provincial veterinarians, diagnosticians, and researchers in attendance.

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Note: Had this potential septicemia case not responded to penicillin it would be a candidate for CanSpot ASF testing program for "peace of mind" ruleout of African Swine Fever. This veterinarian has seen other septicemia cases in which there were mortalities which **were** submitted for CanSpot ASF testing, which fortunately was negative.

Takeaway: there is some overlap between the syndromes described by WeCAHN regarding smallholder swine clients and CWSHIN commercial ones, including occasional septicemia cases. An overview of ASF and CanSpot is appropriate for non-specialist veterinarians serving smallholder swine clients.

Podcast: African Swine Fever for Veterinarians: Clinical Update, with Dr. Jessica Law

<https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-tools/wecahn-information-library/African-swine-fever-clinical-signs>

Podcast: Biosecurity for small swine flocks, with Dr. Jessica Law

<https://wecahn.podbean.com/e/biosecurity-for-small-swine-herds/>

Interesting Cases

i. Small flocks: Mites

- Reported by two veterinarians. May see as incidental or predominate problem.
- Tend to see as a problem in flocks with multiple or protracted ages.
- Treatment strategy:
 - Obtain an insecticide, with application procedure depending on the species.
 - ◇ Northern Fowl mite - focus on the birds.
 - ◇ Other species e.g. red mites - focus on the birds and the environment (clean barn thoroughly; repeat in 2-3 weeks).

Takeaways: Prescribing therapy with which owners can consistently comply, with appropriate withdrawal recommendations, can be challenging for veterinarians for multiple reasons: logistics of using some medications in small scale; access to withdrawal information, and limited range of available medications generally.

ii. Kunekune with non-pruritic raised rash

- And hair loss especially along belly, as well as fever and going off-feed.
- Suspected septicemia with Erysipelas (unvaccinated) or *Strep. suis* as there was marked response to treatment with penicillin.



Interesting Cases (continued)

iii. Suspect foreign body in a goat

- With a history of bloat, reduced rumen contractions, off feed, reduced manure production spanning a week.
- On exam: tense abdomen, was starting to pass manure, did not appear bloated.
- Owner declined further diagnostics and exploratory surgery. Treated with pain meds, mineral oil and magnesium oxide.

Takeaway: the overlap between disease syndromes described by WeCAHN commercial small ruminant network practitioners, and smallholders, is fairly high. However the nature of the smallholder operation (land base, facilities, owner training) may be very different from commercial operations, and individual animals may be to some extent companion animals as well as livestock.

Provincial diagnostic programs support for smallholder producers:

i. British Columbia:

- Subsidized diagnostic examination of smallholder cases submitted to the Animal Health Center in Abbotsford BC (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/animal-health-centre>).
- The reduced fee (\$25 per case for poultry and 75\$ per case for pigs) will be applied when the case is received by the laboratory with a complete submission form.
- Veterinary practices outside of the Fraser Valley can access the Smallholder Program courier account (<https://submit.digital.gov.bc.ca/app/form/submit?f=773bf329-b07d-40d3-a064-5f4eb45389bb>). This allows veterinary practices to submit smallholder diagnostic cases to the laboratory at no/reduced cost to the practice or client. Whole carcasses up to 40kg and portions cases are eligible. All portions cases from pigs must include a 5cm sample of fresh or frozen spleen. For

carcasses over 40kg, please call the Animal Health Center to discuss partially subsidized whole carcass shipping, or send portions. Instruction for submission of whole animals and portions can be found on page 52 of the Animal Health Center Fee Guide [[animalhealthcentrefeeguide.pdf](#) (gov.bc.ca)]

Still work to be done in making eligible producers aware of these programs.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/office-of-the-chief-veterinarian/26527#surveillance>

ii. Alberta:

Non-quota non-commercial disease investigation program for small flocks:

- The main goal of this program is the early detection of highly contagious provincially and federally reportable poultry diseases such as avian influenza (AI) Newcastle disease (NCDV), infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) and *Salmonella*, to protect the commercial poultry industry in Alberta.
- The program also helps NQ/NC producers manage these diseases.
- This program can help producers directly or private veterinarians who refer cases from NQ/NC poultry clients. Not all birds from NQ/NC flocks will be accepted for testing.
- The flock's symptoms must meet the following criteria:
 - Sudden increase in illness and death.
 - Dramatic decrease in egg production.
 - Respiratory signs.
 - Neurologic symptoms.
 - Significant diarrhea.

For more information: [https://www.alberta.ca/non-quota-or-non-commercial-poultry-disease-investigations#:~:text=Non-Commercial"%20Poultry-,Non-quota%2Fnon-commercial%20](https://www.alberta.ca/non-quota-or-non-commercial-poultry-disease-investigations#:~:text=Non-Commercial)



Provincial supports (continued)

iii. Saskatchewan

Small Flock Surveillance Program

- Small flock and backyard poultry producers (non-quota domestic poultry) can submit dead birds directly to Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), or veterinarians can submit on behalf of small flock clients, anywhere in Saskatchewan. Commercial poultry facilities, in addition to wild, or exotic pet birds (such as songbirds, parrots, canaries, etc.) do not qualify under this program. Since mortality can be high in young flocks, only submit chicks or poults less than two weeks of age if losses are greater than five per cent.

For more information: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/livestock/animal-health-and-welfare/saskatchewan-small-flock-poultry-surveillance-program>

QUESTION: Has a program to support small ruminant diagnostics ever been considered?

ANSWER: Not in SK. We have opted for subsidizing targeted studies e.g. abortions.

Saskatchewan Small Holder Swine Program

- Small holders and backyard swine producers (non-commercial domestic swine) can submit deceased swine directly to PDS, or veterinarians can submit on behalf of small holder clients, anywhere in Saskatchewan.

- Whole carcasses, up to a maximum of two animals, may be submitted per case. Animals should be submitted as soon after death as possible, as tissues deteriorate very quickly especially in warm weather.
- Submitting tissue samples is an option if it is not possible to get whole carcasses to the laboratory in a timely fashion.
- Contact your veterinarian for more information so that the correct tissues are collected, stored and shipped in an appropriate manner.

For more information: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/livestock/animal-health-and-welfare/small-holder-swine-health-surveillance-program>

iv. Manitoba: Small Flock Avian Influenza Program

- Manitoba's Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) provides free diagnostic testing and post mortem examinations of dead birds submitted by small flock owners through their local veterinary clinics.
- The focus is on detecting the arrival of Eurasian strains of avian influenza in Manitoba but owners, through their veterinarians, will get information regarding any disease problems diagnosed in the birds.
- The program covers the cost of the post-mortem, histopathology, PCR testing for Avian Influenza A Virus (AIV) and Infectious Laryngotracheitis Virus (ILTV) and any other diagnostic testing at VDS deemed necessary by the pathologist to complete the case.



WeCAHN contacts



www.wecahn.ca

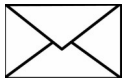


Smallholder Network

<https://www.wecahn.ca/wecahn-networks/wecahn-smallholders-network>



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Meeting takeaways

Mites: In contrast with commercial poultry operations, mites are reported commonly by small flock practitioners. Consulting with a veterinarian is crucial to properly diagnose and manage the problem since therapeutic approach varies with the species of mite identified.

Blood poisoning caused by a bacterial infection is occasionally diagnosed in small swine herds. Accurate diagnosis is essential to control the problem and identify those which could be zoonotic (spread to people).

Resources are available to smallholder producers in each western province to support the health and productivity of your operation, including support for laboratory diagnostics.

Upcoming training: free online webinar series for veterinarians:



Smallholder Swine Course for Veterinarians

This course will prepare veterinary professionals that provide health services to smallholder swine producers. Topics include: general health and production practices, approaching the sick pig/ herd, performing a comprehensive diagnostic workup, vaccination strategies, and more.

Online Webinar: Available upon registration
Date: Jan 16, 23, 30, and Feb 6, 2024
Time: 6:00 to 7:30pm ET
RACE-approved CE: 1.5 hours per seminar
Cost: FREE
Register: Click [here](#) to register for the webinar



Speaker:
Suzanne Burlatschenko
DVM, ABVP, MPH

This course is provided as a component of strengthening Canada's preparedness for African Swine Fever (ASF). Read more [here](#). Email cahssinfo@animalhealthcanada.ca if you have questions.

