Western Canadian Animal Health Network

WeCAHN POULTRY NETWORK PRODUCER REPORT

APRIL - JUNE 2026

The WeCAHN Poultry Network held a quarterly virtual meeting on September 17th, 2026. The network members discussed animal health events from April to June 2026. Veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, public veterinarians, and industry representatives attended the meeting

1) Overview

Data sources in this report include:

1. Clinical Impressions Survey completed by network practitioners.
2. Data shared by Western veterinary diagnostic laboratories: Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) laboratory, Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS) laboratory, University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU) and, for the first time: the British Columbia Animal Health Centre (AHC).
3. Scan: poultry surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

2) Syndromic Surveillance

Important information

This report summarizes veterinary observations and laboratory findings from Q2 2025 to Q2 2026. The findings identify ongoing poultry health problems and changes that warrant attention. Bacterial infections remained an important concern across several production types, while inclusion body hepatitis continued to affect broilers.

Survey participation was limited, so individual veterinary practices could strongly influence the results. BC Animal Health Centre laboratory data were included for the first time in Q2 2026. Their addition increased the number of cases captured but does not, by itself, show that disease increased. Many laboratory submissions were identified only as “chickens,” making it difficult to determine which production sectors were affected.



Broilers

Bacterial infections remained one of the most persistent broiler health problems. Early infections and yolk sac infections were reported throughout the period. Bacterial infections later in production became more prominent in Q2 2026, alongside increasing condemnations associated with cellulitis, a bacterial infection affecting tissues beneath the skin.

Laboratory findings confirmed ongoing colibacillosis, or disease caused by *E. coli*, and other bloodstream infections. At PDS, these diagnoses increased during 2025 and subsequently declined. Continued diagnoses at other laboratories show that bacterial disease remained active, although the results do not establish a renewed increase across Western Canada. Antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* and infections that responded poorly to treatment remained concerns.

Bacterial lameness increased in broilers, with veterinarians consistently indicating an increase in Q2 2026. Reported bacteria included *E. coli* and enterococci, including *Enterococcus cecorum*. Lameness associated with viruses, development, or nutrition did not show a comparable sustained increase.

Laboratory detection of *Enterococcus faecalis* and *E. faecium* increased at UCVM. However, finding these bacteria does not necessarily mean they caused disease. The increasing laboratory detections and clinical lameness reports need to be linked within individual flocks before concluding that enterococci caused the lameness increase.

Inclusion body hepatitis (IBH) remained the strongest digestive disease concern. Veterinarians continued to report persistent disease and repeated increases in activity. In contrast, PDS laboratory diagnoses declined after a late-2025 peak. Some laboratory-confirmed broiler IBH cases also involved systemic *E. coli* infection.

Coccidiosis persisted and increased in some practices in Q2. Variant infectious bursal disease (IBD) virus also remained a concern. Respiratory disease was generally stable, although air sac inflammation occurred. Heart failure and ascites (fluid accumulation in the abdomen) continued to appear in laboratory diagnoses.

Producers should pay particular attention to **early chick deaths, yolk sac infections, increasing lameness, IBH-related mortality, cellulitis condemnations, and infections that respond poorly to treatment**. Linking these problems with laboratory results at the flock level could help determine whether some represent different effects of the same bacterial disease problem.

Broiler breeders

Bacterial disease remained an ongoing breeder concern, including early infections, yolk sac infections, bloodstream infections during lay, and bacterial lameness. Early bacterial and yolk sac infections persisted, with the greatest reported activity occurring in late 2025.

Bloodstream infections during lay increased in early 2026 before moderating in Q2. Peritonitis, or inflammation within the abdominal cavity, emerged in late 2025 and remained a concern into 2026. Its occurrence varied between practices in the most recent quarter. The report identified flock age, reproductive status, bacterial involvement, and management factors as areas to consider when investigating peritonitis.

Laboratory findings confirmed *E. coli* and other bacterial bloodstream infections in breeders. Multidrug-resistant *E. coli* and intermittent *Salmonella* detections remained important concerns. Recurring early mortality and the possibility of bacterial transmission through hatching eggs or to chicks were identified as surveillance priorities.

Bacterial lameness persisted throughout the reporting period. *Staphylococcus* bacteria were repeatedly suspected. Unlike broilers, breeder findings did not show a consistent recent increase across practices. Viral and developmental causes of lameness did not emerge as sustained trends.



Respiratory disease remained limited, although *Mycoplasma* activity was sporadic and included a report of increasing disease in Q2 2026. ILT reports were isolated. Laboratory respiratory results could not be clearly assigned to breeder flocks, limiting comparisons with veterinary observations.

Coccidiosis remained generally stable. There was no sustained increase in egg-production declines or abnormal eggs attributed to infectious bronchitis virus, although confirming that virus as the cause of production problems can be difficult.

Producers should watch for **recurring early mortality, persistent lameness, bacterial infections during lay, peritonitis, and changes in respiratory health**. Antibiotic resistance and bacterial transmission through the breeder–hatchery system remained priorities.



Layers

Peritonitis and salpingitis were the principal layer disease concerns. These conditions involve inflammation of the abdominal cavity and oviduct and showed increasing activity in 2026. Egg yolk peritonitis was also the most notable recent finding in layers.

Unexplained declines in egg production became more prominent in Q2. Infectious bronchitis virus was not commonly implicated. The report identified infectious, nutritional, environmental, and management factors as possible areas for investigation when production declines remain unexplained.

Laboratory chicken submissions included peritonitis, salpingitis, and related reproductive problems. However, production type was not consistently recorded, and there were insufficient laboratory data to establish reproductive disease trends specifically in layers.

Laboratory-confirmed *E. coli* disease included a layer outbreak with high mortality and changes affecting ovarian follicles. These findings supported continued attention to bacterial disease and its involvement in reproductive problems.

Aggression, cannibalism, and hysteria were prominent flock concerns, with intermittent increases during the reporting period. Associated injuries and mortality remained important issues even when infectious disease was generally limited.

Respiratory disease remained minimal. An isolated ILT report in Q2 did not establish an increasing trend. Coccidiosis showed a possible recent increase, while focal duodenal necrosis declined and other intestinal diseases remained limited. Osteoporosis did not show a sustained increase, although continued surveillance in older flocks was identified as appropriate.

Producers should pay attention to **unexplained egg-production losses, reproductive disease, injuries associated with flock behaviour, and increased mortality**. These were more prominent concerns than a broad increase in respiratory or skeletal disease.



Turkeys

Persistent intestinal inflammation and ongoing bacterial disease were the main turkey findings to follow. Veterinarians reported nonspecific enteritis throughout the period, without evidence of a sustained increase in specific intestinal diseases. Coccidiosis, necrotic enteritis, histomoniasis, and intestinal parasites were generally limited in the clinical reports.

Laboratory findings included several enterococcal bacteria, including *E. cecorum, E. faecalis, E. faecium*, and *E. gallinarum*. Liver disease included reovirus-associated hepatitis and liver tissue damage. Enterococcal disease and hepatitis were identified as current surveillance concerns, alongside continued monitoring for parvovirus-associated poult enteritis and mortality syndrome.

Early and late bacterial infections, yolk sac infections, and round heart were intermittent clinical findings. Laboratory diagnoses included bloodstream infections, antibiotic-resistant *E. coli*, and histomoniasis with systemic disease.

Continued detection of different *Salmonella* types remained a concern. No uniform trend was identified across the individual types, but their continued diversity in turkey submissions warranted attention. Laboratory findings also included influenza A, supporting continued influenza surveillance.

Respiratory disease was intermittent. Fungal respiratory disease and ornithobacteriosis, or ORT, were reported during the period without a sustained increase. Laboratory diagnoses included *E. coli* air sac infection and bacterial pneumonia. The report identified litter, ventilation, and air quality as relevant considerations when following respiratory disease.

Reovirus-associated leg tendon inflammation occurred intermittently in 2025 and was not reported clinically in the 2026 quarters. Cardiovascular findings included round heart and laboratory-confirmed aortic rupture.

Producers should monitor **persistent intestinal disease, early mortality, yolk sac infections, bacterial disease, respiratory illness, and cardiovascular causes of death**. Laboratory findings remained important for distinguishing the different causes of turkey mortality.



Small flock health

Small-flock survey information covered only Q1 and Q2 2026, limiting conclusions about longer-term trends. **Respiratory problems involving *Mycoplasma* and ILT were more prominent than in commercial flocks**. Laboratory chicken results could not reliably be assigned to small flocks because flock type was often unspecified.

Peritonitis varied between practices but was considered stable. Ovarian cancer was repeatedly reported by one practice. Marek's disease, predation, and localized bacterial lameness were also reported. Small flock owners should pay attention to **respiratory illness, recurring egg laying problems, lameness, predator losses, and unexplained deaths**.

3) Scan of emerging and important diseases

Highly pathogenic avian influenza remained a concern across poultry sectors.

Commercial flock detections resumed in Manitoba and Alberta in September after the summer pause (CFIA Investigations and orders). Poultry and dairy detections also resumed in the United States (USDA-APHIS)

No HPAI has been detected in Canadian cattle, and Canadian raw-milk surveillance remained negative as of October 2, 2026.

HPAI was detected for the first time in wild birds in Australia in June (LINK). No commercial cases have been reported.

Producer takeaways

1. **Bacterial infections and lameness remained concerns.** Broilers had ongoing early infections, increasing lameness, and more processing losses from skin infections. Antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* remained a breeder concern.
2. **Inclusion body hepatitis continued to affect broilers.** Infectious bursal disease remained present, and some practices reported increasing coccidiosis.
3. **Reproductive infections persisted**. Breeders had ongoing bloodstream and abdominal infections. Layers experienced increasing abdominal and oviduct infections, alongside unexplained egg-production losses.
4. **Respiratory disease remained generally stable**. No clinical IBV, occasional *Mycoplasma*, ILT, and turkey respiratory problems continued.
5. **Avian influenza remained a key risk**. Poultry detections resumed in Manitoba, Alberta, and the United States. No infections had been detected in Canadian cattle, and milk testing remained negative.

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