



The WeCAHN Beef Network held a quarterly virtual meeting on September 2nd, 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 Surveys 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: British Columbia Animal Health Centre (AHC)
3. Scan: bovine surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

2) Interesting Cases

Case study: Peritonitis in calves with ongoing respiratory disease

More than 40 calves died with severe abdominal inflammation at an Alberta feedlot during the first quarter. Cases continued into April and May. All affected calves had been treated for respiratory disease. Examination after death found extensive inflammation, scar-like attachments and fluid in the abdomen. Chronic disease also affected the lungs, chest lining and sac around the heart. Holes in the digestive tract and hardware disease were ruled out. Tests detected *Mycoplasma bovis* and *Histophilus somni*, but additional bacterial findings did not consistently distinguish affected calves from comparison animals. Vitamin and mineral results did not identify a clear cause. Investigators suspected a complication of respiratory disease, but the cause remained unconfirmed. Broader bacterial testing was suggested.



Case study: Feed inhalation in cull cows

Multiple cull cows died during prolonged spring rainfall in southern Alberta. Some died within two days of arriving in receiving pens. No illness or inability to stand had been reported before their deaths. Examination found large amounts of feed in the airways. Their lungs were severely congested and damaged. Dehydration was also noted. Construction had reduced pen availability, leaving some pens extremely muddy. Staff began checking cattle on foot and moving them out of muddy pens. Later deaths occurred in newly arrived cows housed in concrete pens without mud problems. The underlying cause of the feed inhalation remained unresolved.

Case study: Liver infection in a heifer

A 13-month-old Red Angus heifer became slow to approach feed and subsequently died despite antibiotic treatment. Examination found yellow discolouration of body fat and widespread internal inflammation. There were also pockets of infection in the lungs. The liver was enlarged, orange and had several areas of dead tissue. Microscopic examination supported liver damage caused by *Fusobacterium*-like bacteria. Heart failure had also caused blood to back up in the liver. Numerous *Fusobacterium*-like organisms were seen directly in liver samples. Other bacteria recovered from lung and liver included *Acinetobacter baumannii* and *Bacillus* species. Liver manganese was deficient, and several other minerals were marginal. The veterinarian suspected excessive rumen acidity followed by bacteria entering the bloodstream, but this explanation remained unconfirmed.



Case study: Stillborn calves with stiff joints

Three of 28 calves born to heifers in central Saskatchewan were small and stillborn. Their legs and joints were stiff. One submitted calf was approximately 8 to 9 months into gestation. Examination found severe joint stiffness throughout the body and a lower jaw extending beyond the upper jaw. Its muscles were poorly developed, and its tendons were tight. Microscopic findings suggested a problem involving the nervous system had affected muscle development. Changes in immune tissues suggested a viral cause, with BVD considered the leading possibility. Genetic defects, poisonous plants such as lupines or hemlock, and other viruses remained possible. No further testing was authorized, so the cause was not confirmed.

Case study: Newborn calf deaths with kidney damage

In a 250-head herd, five of the first ten calves born to heifers were stillborn or died within three days. Two Angus-cross calves were submitted for examination. One was stillborn, and the other died a few hours after birth. Both submissions revealed severe kidney damage associated with large amounts of oxalate crystals. Kidney abnormalities present from birth and possible intestinal inflammation were also identified. Bacterial testing recovered *Pasteurella* and *Listeria*. Infection involving the placenta was considered the likely cause of death, although no placenta was submitted. Small crystal deposits can occur in newborn calves, but the extensive deposits with kidney damage were significant. The reason for the crystal deposits remained unconfirmed.

Case study: Unusual bacterial infection in a newborn calf

A one-week-old Simmental-cross calf developed pus in both eyes and was unable to stand. It died the following day. Four other recent calf deaths were reported in the herd. Examination of the brain showed signs of bloodstream infection and inflammation of the lining around the brain. There were also signs of abnormal blood clotting and clot breakdown. Bacterial testing recovered *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. BVD testing was negative, while reported liver results showed copper deficiency and marginal manganese. Pathologists described this bacterial infection as extremely rare in cattle. They questioned whether it followed inadequate transfer of protection from colostrum, cross contamination, or another infection that had not been detected. The underlying reason for the infection remained uncertain.

Case study: *Salmonella* Dublin infections in young calves

Laboratory investigations identified *Salmonella* Dublin infections in young calves. A 15-day-old Charolais-cross calf linked to a previous case developed shaking and died. Examination found bloodstream infection and inflammation around the brain. *Salmonella* Dublin was recovered from its lung, while *E. coli* was recovered from its brain, suggesting a possible mixed infection. Another Charolais-cross calf, 9 days old, developed seizures and was euthanized. It had intestinal and widespread internal infection, with *Salmonella* Dublin recovered from the spleen. Low liver copper and iron suggested a possible mineral issue in its dam. In another herd experiencing ongoing calf losses, a suckling calf had *Salmonella* Dublin in the spleen, lung and liver. That calf also had IBR, bovine coronavirus, intestinal coccidiosis and bacterial lung disease. Testing detected *M. haemolytica*, *P. multocida* and *H. somni* alongside these infections.



3) Syndromic Surveillance

Q2 2026 surveillance trends

Veterinarian reports and laboratory results from the past three quarters were compared to identify ongoing cattle health problems and changes needing attention.

Respiratory disease

Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) remained a major concern. Pneumonia was consistently reported, with some veterinarians noting increases in *Mannheimia haemolytica* and *Histophilus somni*. Repeated treatment failures involving *M. haemolytica* remained a concern.

Most respiratory viruses showed little change. Laboratory detections peaked in late 2025, then declined and remained within expected levels during Q2.

Pneumonia remained prominent in postmortem examinations, but many cases lacked testing to identify the specific bacteria or viruses involved.

Bovine coronavirus showed an increasing laboratory trend, although positive results remained within expected levels. *Bibersteinia trehalosi* also increased, with detections above expected levels.



Digestive disease

Diarrhea remained the main digestive problem after becoming more prominent over winter. Bloody diarrhea became more prominent in Q2.

Veterinarian reports showed no consistent increase in individual diarrhea-causing organisms. *E. coli* and coronavirus were mostly stable, while *Cryptosporidium* was stable or decreasing; one veterinarian reported increasing rotavirus.

Earlier laboratory increases in BVD and coronavirus subsided. Rotavirus detections remained within expected levels.

Salmonella detections increased, and *Salmonella* Dublin was confirmed in several calf deaths. Inflammation of the rumen and large intestine also increased above expected levels.

Johne's disease was generally reported infrequently, although one veterinarian noted an ongoing increase. Other digestive problems, including bloat, ulcers, liver disease and parasites, were less prominent overall, with some differences between practices.

Breeding and pregnancy problems

Breeding problems increased seasonally, with bull injuries and reproductive disease becoming more prominent. Pregnancy losses declined, and infertility caused by infection remained uncommon.

Copper deficiency was often noted in infertility cases unrelated to infection.

The earlier increase in positive *Neospora caninum* blood tests did not continue, and *Tritrichomonas fetus* detections remained uncommon.

Bacillus licheniformis detections increased, partly because broader testing (i.e. reproductive panels) was being used more often.

Lameness

Lameness remained common, with hoof and foot problems becoming more prominent in Q2. Inflammation of the skin between the toes ("interdigital dermatitis") increased and was identified as a problem to watch following heavy rainfall in Alberta.

Higher cattle values encouraged producers to authorize more veterinary visits, testing and treatment. Some increases in reported problems may therefore reflect more investigation rather than more disease.



Widespread infections and other whole-body problems

Bloodstream infections increased in veterinarian reports and laboratory diagnoses. More samples were also being submitted, which may explain part of the laboratory increase.

E. coli remained the most consistently reported cause of bloodstream infection, with a stable trend. Some veterinarians reported increases in *H. somni* and *M. haemolytica*.

Inflammation around the brain (meningitis) peaked in Q2 and was linked to increasing widespread *Salmonella* Dublin infections.

Bacillus cereus detections exceeded expected levels across different sample types. *Staphylococcus aureus* also exceeded expected levels in some laboratory results, but this pattern was not consistent.

MAP detections showed a longer-term increase, although the proportion of positive tests remained within expected levels. No *Anaplasma marginale* was detected in Q2.

Nutrient deficiencies and poisonings were generally uncommon and stable. Individual reports of copper deficiency and lead poisoning did not indicate a network-wide increase.

Mastitis

Several bacteria associated with udder infections were detected near or above expected levels: *Staphylococcus haemolyticus*, *S. simulans*, *S. chromogenes*, *S. epidermidis* and *Bacillus licheniformis*.

Streptococcus dysgalactiae subspecies *dysgalactiae* detections continued to rise but remained within expected levels.



4) Network Updates

Research updates: Feedlot Health and AMU/AMR: an update on the 2025 respiratory and enteric antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance is being finalized with infographics. The 2025 Alberta feedlot health surveillance data will be released by the end of the year, alongside a long-term trend analysis spanning 2019 to 2025 comparing feedlot mortality to AMU and AMR profiles.

Vaccine Development: VIDO completed research on a novel *H. somni* subunit vaccine, identifying four promising candidate antigens. Genomic research indicated that *H. somni* strains in healthy cattle differ genetically from strains isolated from fatal respiratory or cardiac cases.

PDS is currently developing a **BRD sequencing panel** (similar to their existing bovine reproductive sequencing panel), with completion targeted for late 2026 or early 2027.

5) Weather-Emergency Relevant Resources

- [British Columbia](#) – Prepare Agriculture operations for wildfire
- [Alberta](#) – Farm animals and livestock preparedness – flood
- [Saskatchewan](#) – Livestock emergencies
- [Manitoba](#) – Emergency preparedness – Support for livestock producers affected by drought [LINK](#).
- Comprehensive list of resources from OAHN: Wildfires and emergency management resources [LINK](#)



6) Scan of Emerging and Important Diseases

- **New World screwworm (NWS, *Cochliomyia hominivorax*)**
 - Cases continue in Mexico, with only Baja California and Baja California del Sur currently free of NWS. Surveillance updates are available through [SENASICA dashboard](#).
 - NWS, eradicated from the United States in 1966, was first confirmed in a 3-week-old Texas calf on June 3, 2026 ([ABC News](#)).
 - Additional resources include [USDA NWS detections](#), the [GenomicEpi dashboard](#), and the [USDA NWS Playbook and supplemental materials](#).
- **Shamonda-like virus in continental Europe ([Beacon](#))**
 - A newly identified virus has been detected in several European countries. Since mid-July 2026, affected French and Swiss dairy herds have reported fever, diarrhea, reduced appetite and substantial milk losses.
 - The virus, never before detected in Europe, is similar to the Schmallerberg virus and it's transmitted by midges.
 - Effects on pregnancy remain unconfirmed and are being monitored. The virus was also found in 2 Swiss horses with nervous-system disease ([Swiss Institute of Virology and Immunology](#)).
 - Cattle detections during the same midge season suggest a single introduction near the French, German and Swiss borders.
- **Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)**
 - **Canada:** No HPAI has been detected in cattle; all raw-milk samples tested through July 30, 2026, were negative ([CFIA](#)). Commercial poultry outbreaks resumed in Manitoba and Alberta in September as fall wild bird migration began ([CFIA investigations](#)).
 - **USA:** Dairy cattle cases continued in Idaho and Utah, reaching 1,171 confirmed cases across 20 states by August 7 ([USDA-APHIS](#)). Commercial poultry outbreaks resumed in early September ([USDA-APHIS poultry detections](#)).
 - **Humans:** No new US cases were reported; the stated total since 2024 remained 71 ([CDC](#)).



7) Producer Takeaways

- Respiratory disease remains a major concern, with some cases failing to respond to treatment. Certain bacteria and bovine coronavirus showed increasing trends.
- Bloodstream infections increased. Salmonella Dublin caused serious illness affecting the brain and other organs.
- Diarrhea remained prominent, while bloody diarrhea and inflammation of the digestive tract increased. Laboratory detections of Salmonella also rose.
- Lameness became more prominent, including skin inflammation between the toes after heavy rainfall in Alberta. Increased testing may also explain some reported increases.
- International concerns include New World screwworm in Mexico, Texas and New Mexico, and a new virus (Shamonda-like virus) in Europe. HPAI remained undetected in Canadian cattle, but poultry outbreaks resumed in Manitoba and Alberta in September.

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