Western Canadian Animal Health Network

WECAHN DAIRY NETWORK PRODUCER SUMMARY

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025

The WeCAHN Dairy Network held its quarterly meeting on November 6th, 2025, to discuss dairy cattle health from July to September 2025.

1) Overview

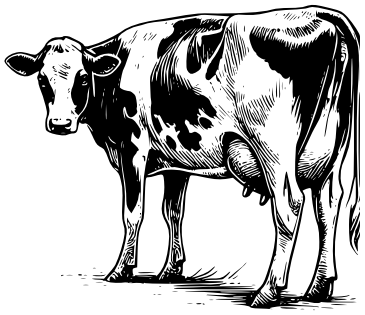
This report draws data from Clinical Impressions Surveys completed by network practitioners, diagnostic results from western veterinary laboratories (VDS, PDS, and UCVM DSU), and dairy surveillance reports from various sources and networks.

2) Interesting Cases

1) Calves in a pen developed pneumonia and digestive problems after a feeder malfunction left them 40–50 L short at weaning. The robot will be replaced, and new calves will only be placed on working feeders. Cross-suckling was also noted, a common issue in group housing.

2) An adult cow developed sudden illness with loss of appetite, milk drop, and drooping left ear and eyelid. Despite supportive care, the cow was euthanized, and lab testing confirmed listeriosis. The bacterium that causes listeriosis can spread to people; take precautions when handling affected animals.

3) A dairy herd experienced an outbreak of severe pneumonia, with several cows ill and one death. Treatments failed. Lab testing showed mixed bacterial infections, including one bacterium that has been emerging in recent years.



3) Syndromic Surveillance

1) Respiratory disease: Commonly reported in the clinical impression surveys (CIS). Laboratory findings revealed that certain viruses were prevalent in dairy herds.

2) Digestive disease: Commonly to very frequently reported in the CIS; diarrhea was commonly reported. Laboratory findings showed Johne's disease, *Salmonella* Dublin, and viruses were within control limits. At UCVM DSU, a severely sick calf had a multidrug-resistant *E. coli* isolate.

3) Reproductive diseases: CIS reported reproductive diseases ranging from rare to very frequent; female reproductive diseases were consistently noted at high frequency. Heat stress and limited replacements are driving increased infertility and retention of older cows, with high cull prices prompting either immediate shipping of sick animals or extended treatment. Laboratory findings showed *Neospora* were within limits at PDS but peaking at VDS.

4) Musculoskeletal diseases: Variably reported in the CIS from rarely to commonly. Frequency trends varied (stable to increasing), potentially related to treat versus cull decisions.

5) Mastitis: Variably reported in the CIS from rare to common. *Staph. aureus* milk cultures exceeded control limits at VDS. Chronic mastitis caused by *Prototheca*, an algae, was detected through high somatic cell counts in multiple provinces.

4) Scan

1) Bovine tuberculosis in Manitoba (update): One infected dairy herd was depopulated, with ongoing testing and no additional positives detected. The strain does not match known North American livestock or wildlife strains. Resources from CFIA and Manitoba governments.

2) Lumpy skin disease in Europe: Most recently confirmed in Spain. CFIA applied import restrictions. CFIA Fact Sheet available.

3) Longhorned tick (LHT) and theileriosis: The ticks are moving northward with establishment risk in Nova Scotia and coastal BC. Theileriosis, a blood infection transmitted by the tick, was diagnosed in a Canadian show cow that had been imported from Illinois. This cow will be a lifetime carrier of the bacterium. Surveillance is ongoing through CAHSS and the e-tick tool.

4) RAIZO bovine network: Five cows died from anaplasmosis in one herd. Another farm had lead poisoning with exposed cattle now moving across farms and into the US. RAIZO members noted severe stable fly problems not observed in WeCAHN herds.

5) HPAI surveillance: Canada remains negative for bird flu in dairy cattle: 6,643 raw milk samples tested as of Nov. 5, 2025, all negative (CFIA). US outbreak continues across multiple states (Idaho, California, Texas, others), although no new dairy cases have been reported over the last 30 days (USDA). Poultry cases had an early start in Canada and the US.

5) Takeaways:

1. Pneumonia cases have been harder to treat in some herds this year, despite the administration of antibiotics. Keep a close eye on sick animals, watch how they respond to treatment and contact your veterinarian for support.
2. Chronic mastitis caused by *Prototheca* was detected through high somatic cell counts in multiple provinces. The source is often environmental. This infection doesn't respond to antibiotics, and management relies on culling affected cows and tightening parlour cleaning practices.
3. Canada remains free of bird flu in dairy cattle. Stay alert during this higher-risk period, as poultry outbreaks began earlier than usual this year and the US continues to report cases in dairy herds.

Financial support was provided under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.