



The WeCAHN Dairy Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on February 12th, 2026, to discuss animal health events from October to December 2025 with veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, and industry representatives.

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, and University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).
3. Scan: bovine surveillance reported by other sources or networks.



2) Interesting Cases

i) Case study: Q fever abortion investigation in a dairy herd



- Two abortions occurred in an otherwise healthy, well-vaccinated dairy herd, and testing confirmed *Coxiella burnetii*, the bacteria that cause Q fever.
- The pathologist requires the placenta, fetus and a PCR test to confirm a diagnosis of Q fever.
- Q fever may be more commonly associated with abortions in sheep and goats, but it can cause abortions in cows, too. Cows can shed the bacteria even when they appear normal.
- Q fever can cause disease in humans after exposure to aborted tissues, placenta, contaminated air, and raw milk.
- In most people, infection causes flu-like symptoms or no symptoms. In immunocompromised individuals, it can cause chronic Q fever. Refer to the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#).

ii) Case study: Pneumonia outbreak with sudden deaths in adult cows

- Ten adult cows died over a week with symptoms of pneumonia, reduced milk yield, and poor appetite, shortly after a new bull was introduced.
- The investigation revealed that the pneumonia was caused by a bacterium, *Mannheimia haemolytica*.
- Practitioners reported similar outbreaks in adult cows in several regions, sometimes involving *Pasteurella* or underlying viruses such as BRSV.
- Field reports and research suggest that viruses may weaken the airway, allowing bacteria like *M. haemolytica* to cause severe pneumonia.

iii) Case study: Calves with unexplained enlarged joints

- Several crossbred calves in a larger herd developed swollen carpal and hock joints at 3-6 weeks of age, with no signs of infection.
- The investigation was extensive, including post-mortem, bloodwork and water quality testing. The investigation continues.



iv) Research update: Robotic milking and udder health checks

- Robotic milking systems are extremely useful. But practitioners commented that robotic systems can delay detection of udder problems compared with parlour setups. Regular checks are often discussed when mastitis problems occur, but may be overlooked in herds without obvious issues.
- Milking times, box times, conductivity, and other milk-quality indicators are useful tools. However, these indicators should not replace teat-end checks and post-milking teat appearance. Routine teat scoring every 3-6 months and regular testing of robot suction were recommended during herd visits.



3) Syndromic Surveillance

Important information

Clinical impression surveys

Never; **Rarely** = 1-2 times per 3 months; **Commonly** = 1-2 times per month; **Very frequently** = 3+ times per month.

'Control charts'

Control charts are a simple way of presenting data collected over time (e.g., increasing or decreasing detection frequencies). Each data point reflects the number of positive samples or cases reported by a diagnostic laboratory over 3 months (quarter of a year). The upper and lower horizontal lines are called **control limits**. Individual points lying outside the control limits suggest a need for investigation to determine whether/how significant a signal they represent.



Respiratory system disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Respiratory disease was reported **Commonly** to **Very frequently**.
- Bronchopneumonia was reported **Commonly**, with *Mannheimia* diagnoses described as **stable** to **increasing**.
- Un-differentiated pneumonia ranged from **Rarely** to **Very frequently**.

Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS)

Detections of common viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory disease in dairy cattle remained within the control limits of their respective control charts. Cultures of *Histophilus*, *Mannheimia*, and *Pasteurella* in dairy were higher than long-term patterns, though not suitable for control-chart interpretation. *Mycoplasma bovis* PCR detections in dairy were high but within limits, while beef detections exceeded the upper limit.

Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS)

Detections of common viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory disease in dairy cattle remained within control limits. *Mycoplasma bovis* PCR detections peaked and exceeded the upper limit, and *Histophilus* cultures also peaked.

University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU)

Two cases of bronchopneumonia involved *Pasteurella* and another with *Mannheimia*.

Digestive System Disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Digestive disease was reported **Rarely** to **Very frequently**.
- Diarrhea and dysentery were reported **Rarely** to **Commonly**.
- Abomasal problems ranged from **Rarely** to **Commonly**.

PDS

Salmonella Dublin was **not** detected in dairy cattle. Bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) was **not** detected in dairy, though detections were very high across all cattle types due to a large number of beef cases. Rotavirus and coronavirus detections in dairy remained within limits. Diagnoses included traumatic reticulitis-peritonitis (i.e., TRP or hardware disease) and inflammation of the intestines and stomachs. Two dairy cattle had liver inflammation.

VDS

A calf was diagnosed with rotavirus diarrhea, *Cryptosporidium*, and other conditions. Hepatic lipidosis (i.e., fatty liver) was diagnosed in one case.

UCVM DSU

Cases included rotavirus, *Cryptosporidium*, and mixed coronavirus/rotavirus outbreaks.

Reproductive System Disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Reproductive disease was reported **Rarely** to **Very frequently**.
- Abortions and infectious infertility were reported **Rarely**.
- Uterine and ovarian disease were reported **Commonly** to **Very frequently**.

PDS

Diagnoses of placentitis and idiopathic abortion (i.e., unknown cause) were within control limits. *Neospora caninum* and *Ureaplasma* were detected in a few cases.

VDS

Neospora serology detections peaked in Q4, exceeding the upper control limit of the control chart. There were detections by PCR. *Ureaplasma* PCR detections also peaked. There was one case of idiopathic abortion.

UCVM DSU

There were single diagnoses of idiopathic abortion and a non-viable neonate with *E. coli* infection.





Musculoskeletal System Disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Musculoskeletal disease was reported **Commonly** to **Very frequently**.
- Foot disease, arthritis, fractures and other musculoskeletal diseases were reported with a wide range from **Rarely** to **Very frequently**. The frequency of diagnosis also ranged **stable** to **increasing**.
- Trauma or welfare-related issues ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.

Cardiovascular Disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Cardiovascular disease ranged from **Rarely** to **Commonly**.

UCVM DSU

There were eight cases of heart disease in beef cattle. During the WeCAHN Beef Network meeting, a practitioner reported a feedlot with increased *Histophilus somni* mortality, mainly myocarditis and pericarditis.

Multisystemic and Metabolic Diseases

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Multisystemic disease ranged from **Rarely** to **Commonly**.
- Metabolic disease ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.
- Hypocalcemia and ketosis were reported **Commonly**.

PDS

Bovine leukemia virus (BLV) serology and Johne's disease PCR-positive cases remained within control limits.

VDS

BLV serology, Johne's disease serology and PCR-positive cases remained within control limits.

Neurological System Disease

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Neurological disease was reported **Rarely**.

PDS

A juvenile Holstein Friesian was diagnosed with meningoencephalitis (inflammation of the brain and meninges).

VDS

There was a diagnosis of suppurative meningoencephalitis.

Mastitis

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory results

- Udder and teat problems ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.
- Acute and chronic mastitis were each reported **Rarely**.
- *Klebsiella* mastitis was reported **Never**.
- *Staphylococcus aureus* mastitis was reported **Very frequently**.
- *Streptococcus uberis* mastitis was reported **Rarely**.
- *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* mastitis ranged from **Rarely** to **Very frequently**.
- *Klebsiella*, *Staph. aureus* and *Strep. dysgalactiae* were reportedly diagnosed at a **stable** to **increasing** frequency compared to Q3.
- Other mastitis causes were reported **Commonly**.
- A practitioner noted increased environmental causes of mastitis linked to poor-quality sawdust bedding, with some herds shifting toward composted or sand bedding.

Staph and *Strep* bacteria that cause mastitis were within control limits at the laboratories.



4) Scan and other updates

- Bovine tuberculosis investigation in a Manitoba dairy herd is ongoing ([CFIA, 2026](#)).
- Lumpy skin disease in Italy, France and Spain ([European Union Food, Farming, Fisheries, 2025](#)).
- Bluetongue virus serotype 3 was newly detected in Northern Ireland ([DAERA, 2026](#)).
- Two recent theileriosis cases from the same premises in Ontario ([Ontario Veterinary advisory](#)) emphasized the emerging risk of the long-horned tick, the vector for *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda. The first cow was imported from the U.S., while the second was likely infected on-farm by biting flies. No long-horned ticks were detected on the premises. CAHSS hosted a webinar; follow the [link](#) to view the recording.
- HPAI H5N1 have not been detected in Canadian cattle ([CFIA, 2026](#)), while the US continues to monitor the situation with no new detections in February 2026 ([USDA-APHIS, 2026](#)). The Netherlands reported the first cattle with H5N1 antibodies outside the U.S. ([Science, 2026](#)), reinforcing the value of ongoing milk surveillance and biosecurity.
- The Manitoba chief veterinary officer's office held a bovine health update meeting and plans to coordinate regular meetings.
- A comprehensive diagnostic approach for beef abortion investigation was presented at the WCABP conference ([WCABP 2026 Proceedings](#)).

5) Producer Takeaways

1. Abortions in a dairy herd can have a number of causes, including bacteria that can also make people sick (e.g., Q fever). Because bacteria can stay in the environment for a long time, using gloves, eye protection, and a face mask when handling aborted calves or placentas is a simple way to reduce your risk of exposure.
2. Some veterinarians have seen pneumonia in mature cows, even when vaccination programs are in place. Viruses or declining immunity may play a role. Keep a record of sick cows and contact your veterinarian. They may advise sending in samples for testing to help identify bacteria or viruses and guide treatments.
3. Higher rates of mastitis have been linked to humid sawdust bedding. With good quality sawdust harder to source, some farms are turning to composted or sand bedding to keep cows cleaner and reduce mastitis pressure. Discuss bedding availability and quality with your herd veterinarian to help identify practical alternatives that lower the risk of environmental mastitis.

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