



The WeCAHN small ruminant network met 24th June 2025 to discuss the animal health events of Q1 (January - March 2025). Veterinary practitioners, lab diagnosticians, researchers, and industry representatives were in attendance.

## 1) Overview of dataset

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 College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).
3. Scan: small ruminant surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

## 2) Syndromic Surveillance

### Important information

**Clinical impression surveys.** Completed by 2 small ruminant veterinarians from Saskatchewan  
**Never;** **Rarely** = 1-2 times per 3 months; **Commonly** = 1-2 times per month; **Very frequently** = 3+ times per month.



### Laboratory and field cases

Reproductive issues, including abortions, infectious infertility, and acute mastitis, were reported **rarely** and **commonly** this quarter. Cache Valley Virus (CVV) abortions remain prevalent in the prairies but have not been reported in British Columbia. Abortion pathogens reported commonly included CVV, Chlamydia, and Coxiella. Labs noted an average rate of placental inflammation linked to goat abortions, with bacterial abortions increasing in goats but stable in sheep.



*Staphylococcus aureus* was found in an Anglo-Nubian goat's milk sample submitted to PDS. This bacterium can cause food poisoning with severe gastrointestinal symptoms, but pasteurization kills Staph and similar bacteria.

Practitioners **rarely** reported respiratory, digestive, or multisystemic conditions; neurological, dermatological, and musculoskeletal issues were also rare.

**Respiratory cases** in sheep included undifferentiated pneumonia (seen rarely in the field), one confirmed case each of OPP, *M. ovi*, and *Mannheimia*, and three cases of *Bibersteinia*. No respiratory diseases were reported in goats. This quarter's sheep pathology cases comprised interstitial and aspiration pneumonia, pleuritis, pleuropneumonia, pulmonary edema, and several bronchopneumonia cases (all within average ranges). One case of bronchopneumonia had concurrent copper deficiency.

**Digestive issues:** Several sheep were diagnosed with enteritis. An alpaca was diagnosed with esophagitis, gastritis, and a perforated ulcer leading to internal organ infection. Goats had higher than usual cases of *Enterococcus faecalis*.

There was one PCR detection of *Mycobacterium avium* paratuberculosis (MAP or Johne's disease) in sheep and seven in goats. The number of cases is within previous rates of detection.

Caseous lymphadenitis (CL) confirmed at the lab were within the normal ranges.

One case of brain inflammation in sheep caused by *Listeria* was reported by a pathologist.

### 3) Interesting Cases

**A 12-year-old big-horned sheep ram** in poor physical condition, showing dehydration and a jaw mass, was brought in for veterinary evaluation. The ram experienced cardiac arrest at the clinic and subsequently died. Pathology and laboratory analysis identified chronic pneumonia with *Bibersteinia* detected in lung samples. The ram tested negative for *M. ovi*. Examination and laboratory culture of the jaw mass grew bacteria commonly associated with facial and oral abscesses.

**Abortions in a sheep flock:** Three out of 100 sheep aborted a month before term. Lab tests identified a *Salmonella* strain known to cause abortions in small ruminants. Since *Salmonella* can infect humans, handle abortion materials carefully to prevent illness.

**Abscessed lymph node in a goat.** The owner expressed concern regarding caseous lymphadenitis (CL) and requested diagnostic testing through their veterinarian. CL results were negative; however, alternative bacteria were identified. This information guided the veterinarian's clinical management, which included draining and irrigating the abscess, excising additional affected lymph nodes, and initiating antibiotic therapy to control the infection.

**CVV** has not been reported in BC. The BC Animal Health Centre will start testing for CVV in blood samples received for other testing such as CAE or OPP. Producers will be contacted to seek authorization for CVV testing



### 4) Scan

#### WeCAHN Smallholder Network Q1 2025:

1. **Listeriosis encephalitis** in small flocks in the BC Lower Mainland, Q2 2024 into Q1 2025. Four flocks of sheep and a flock of pygmy goats affected. None of the flocks were fed silage (a commonly identified source of *Listeria*) and the source of *Listeria* remains unknown.
2. **BC Smallholder Disease Detection Program:** top 3 diagnoses for small ruminants: mixed/diet/husbandry, haemonchosis, listeriosis.

#### Bovine tuberculosis in a Manitoba dairy herd

([Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\), 2025](#)).

*Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex was detected in a 7-year-old cow at a federally inspected slaughter plant in MB. The CFIA confirmed the presence of *M. bovis* (bTB) on June 13th and traced the animal to a Pembina Valley herd, which is now quarantined pending testing and depopulation. The source of bTB infection is still under investigation.

#### Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Europe

After decades of being absent in Europe, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was detected in 2 additional countries in early 2025:

- Hungary: 5 herds affected so in the Spring of 2025, with the last detection on April 17, 2025 ([British Agriculture Bureau \(BAB\), 2025](#)).
- Slovakia: 6 herds were affected in the Spring of 2025, with the last detection on April 4, 2025 ([BAB, 2025](#)).
- Germany was successful in controlling the FMD case detected in water buffalo in January of this year and has been fully reinstated as free of FMD by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). ([Reuters, 2025](#)).
- Additional information about FMD: CFIA ([LINK](#)).





**Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1)** was confirmed in a sheep in England on March 24, 2025, following surveillance testing of infected poultry in the premises. ([UK's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2025](#)).

HPAI is still present in poultry in Canada. The current outbreak started in February 2022, and the last detection was reported in May, 2025. To see a summary of cases follow the link: [Status of ongoing avian influenza response by province - inspection.canada.ca](#)

**HPAI in Ostriches in BC:** On May 31, 2025, the CFIA released an update ([LINK](#)) stating that the ostriches were infected with genotype D1.3, a strain of HPAI not identified elsewhere in Canada.

The ostrich farm owners have been in a legal battle against the CFIA, have managed to build a strong social media presence, and gathered supporters to try and stop CFIA from fulfilling their mandate to depopulate the flock. The HPAI case was confirmed in December of 2024 and as of July 20<sup>th</sup> the ostrich flock is still on farm.

The USDA reports over 1,000 cattle HPAI cases across 17 states ([USDA](#)), with several human infections traced back to dairy herd exposure ([CDC](#)). HPAI has not been found in Canadian cattle or in any unpasteurized (raw) milk sample tested ([CFIA](#)).

#### Member update:

A research publication on Dr. Van Donkersgoed's study on highly prolific ewes will be published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal. More lambs per ewe is not always better; producers need to adjust their practices and resources to be able to tend for more lambs and for their ewe's health. Stay tuned.

## 5) Meeting Takeaways:

1. Not all abscessed lymph nodes are CL cases. Laboratory testing helps practitioners determine the most effective treatment for individuals and flocks/herds with abscessed lymph nodes.
2. Cache Valley Virus continues to be detected in abortion cases in the prairies, but it has not been reported in BC.
3. Often producers opt out of laboratory testing for abortion cases. Anyone involved in handling abortive materials needs to be aware of the infection risk and protect themselves accordingly. Multiple zoonotic pathogens can lead to abortions in small ruminants.

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

