



The WeCAHN Small Ruminants Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on November 20th, 2025. Network members discussed animal health events from July to September. The session brought together veterinarians, laboratories, researchers, and industry representatives. Data were synthesized from clinical impressions surveys completed by practitioners and laboratory submissions from Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS), and the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).

1) Interesting Cases

Case study: Malignant catarrhal fever in a lamb

A 4-month-old lamb from a flock of 20 became weak, stopped eating, and had respiratory symptoms before dying despite receiving veterinary treatment. Tissue testing showed widespread inflammation and damaged blood vessels with no lentiviruses present, but PCR confirmed *ovine herpesvirus-2* (OvHV-2, which causes malignant catarrhal fever - MCF). Although sheep are common carriers of OvHV-2 without becoming ill, this case highlights the value of careful diagnostic investigation when unusual deaths occur.

Case study: Urinary blockage caused by silica stones in a ram

A six-year-old ram developed a complete urinary blockage from a silica stone, despite being grass-fed with no obvious environmental sources. Silica stones in small ruminants are uncommon and often linked to diet. Most urinary stones in lambs are struvite. In feedlot lambs, urinary blockages are typically managed with dietary adjustments and water availability; surgery is rarely cost-effective, and euthanasia is often chosen. This case shows the value of urinary stone analysis and awareness that forage-only diets can still pose a risk for urinary blockage.



2) Syndromic Surveillance and Laboratory Surveillance

In general, Q3 2025 had few disease reports outside normal ranges.

Respiratory disease in sheep was rare, with most flocks showing no clinical signs. Bronchopneumonia, fibrinous pneumonia, and interstitial pneumonia were rarely observed, and detections of *Bibersteinia trehalosi*, *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni*, and *Mycoplasma* spp. remained stable. Aspiration pneumonia was slightly increased but still within normal limits.

Digestive disease was infrequent, with diarrhea seen rarely. *E. coli*, rotavirus, *Cryptosporidium*, and coccidia detections were stable, and gastrointestinal parasites were sporadically observed. Abomasal ulcers, frothy bloat, and other digestive conditions remained rare and stable.

Reproductive disease, including abortions, uterine, and male reproductive issues, remains uncommon this time of the year. Causes such as *Chlamydia* and *Campylobacter* were not detected, and non-infectious causes like nutritional deficiencies remained stable.

Musculoskeletal issues including lameness, foot rot, arthritis, and fractures, were rare, with foot rot decreasing and arthritis and fractures stable.

Neurological disease remains rare, with occasional cases of polioencephalomalacia ("polio") and single listeriosis detections, all within normal levels.

Dermatological disease and external parasite issues, including lice, mange, and keds, were reported rarely and remained stable.

Urinary disease, including urolithiasis (kidney stones) and pyelonephritis (kidney inflammation), was rare, with a single case of renal tubular necrosis reported.

Mastitis cases were within normal limits, with occasional detections of *Staphylococcus* spp. in goats and sheep.

Multisystemic disease, including anemia, nutritional deficiencies, and caseous lymphadenitis, was seen rarely. *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* detections were within normal limits, and septicemia occurrences were stable.



3) Scan of Emerging and International Issues

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) – British Columbia

Nearly 100 deer died in the Grand Forks, BC area, marking the first EHD detection in the province since 1988. Some bighorn sheep were also affected, and a domestic sheep producer reported losses, though no testing was done. EHD highlights the risk of vector-borne diseases, such as bluetongue, during favorable seasonal conditions. Rapid, high-mortality events suggest this was not Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and testing was limited due to a public service strike.

Stable Fly impacts in Quebec

Increased dermatological lesions and lamb losses were reported in QC, peaking in August due to stable flies. Western provinces saw shorter fly seasons and fewer problems, likely due to wetter early summer and favorable August weather while Eastern regions had prolonged drought until September–October.

Bovine Theileriosis – Ontario Dairy Cow

For the first time in Canada, a dairy show cow imported from Illinois, US, was diagnosed with *Theileria orientalis* genotype Ikeda, (the blood parasite that causes theileriosis). The cow developed anemia after import and is now a lifelong carrier. The vector, Asian longhorned tick, has not been detected in Canada, and inspections confirmed no ticks on the premises. Producers should monitor imported animals for anemia and be aware of vector-borne disease risks even in regions without the tick. Canadian resources include [e-tick](#), the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System [vector-borne diseases](#) webpage, and [Illinois Extension](#).



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1

No HPAI has been detected in Canadian cattle, and extensive raw milk testing has been negative to date. In the U.S., 1,082 dairy cases have been confirmed across 18 states, with human cases unchanged. In contrast, poultry cases started early this season, affecting farms in BC and Alberta.

Experimental studies showed HPAI H5N1 can cause severe mastitis in goats, affecting milk quality and production, and transmitting to nursing kids, stressing biosecurity and cross-species awareness.

Contagious Nodular Dermatitis (Lumpy Skin Disease) – Europe

Lumpy skin disease, a viral insect-transmitted cattle disease, is spreading westward in Europe with first confirmed cases in Italy, France, and Spain in 2025. CFIA implemented import restrictions on animals and products from affected regions. Producers should be aware of international risks and follow import guidelines to prevent introduction of capripox viruses.

4) Research Updates

University of Calgary Scrapie research project

The University of Calgary conducting research project on economics and awareness of scrapie among Canadian small ruminant producers.



Participation in scrapie testing remains low. Producers are hesitant due to historical severe regulatory actions, even though less severe genotype-based protocols are now in place. Clear communication about current CFIA procedures is essential to improve participation and support both animal health and market access





Producer Takeaways

- Overall, disease levels in sheep and goats are as expected, but occasional cases like listeriosis and septicemia show the importance of testing sick animals to understand what's happening.
- Recent events, such as EHD in BC deer and stable fly-related lamb losses in Quebec, show how weather and location can quickly change disease risks.
- Avian influenza H5N1 can cause severe mastitis in goats and spread to nursing kids, highlighting the need for good biosecurity and awareness of diseases that can affect multiple species.
- Few producers participate in Scrapie testing even though control programs have evolved. Talk to your veterinarian about the current genotype-based scrapie control program.

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