



Cache Valley virus in sheep and goats

Background

Cache Valley virus (CVV) is a mosquito-borne virus detected throughout North America, Central America and parts of South America.

- The virus can be detected in sheep, goats, horses, deer, and other animals including humans, but is carried and spread only by mosquitoes.
- Antibodies to CVV have been found in Saskatchewan sheep, cattle, horses, and mule deer.

Disease in people

People become infected by bites from mosquitoes infected with CVV, and **not** from exposure to other infected animals or people.

- **A very small number of human CVV cases have been reported.** Case symptoms are described as initially non-specific, such as fever and headaches, progressing to more severe signs including problems with movement, memory loss, and in several cases, death.

Disease in sheep and goats

- Sheep and goats infected with CVV may develop fever or loss of appetite, usually with few other signs.
- If infected during early pregnancy (< 45 days gestation), a range of problems may occur from abortion to defects in the unborn offspring, including muscle, leg, and nervous system deformities. Affected offspring may also be born dead, or very weak.

Here are some pictures of aborted lambs submitted to the Animal Health Laboratory at Guelph:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/ahl/book/export/html/4574>



If you think CVV might be present in your flock:

Don't wait to seek a diagnosis! Your veterinarian can submit aborted fetuses and stillbirths, or dead lambs/kids to a diagnostic laboratory to try to identify CVV in the tissues or body fluids.

- Animals in the breeding flock/herd can be blood tested for antibodies to CVV. However, a positive test only means that the animal has been exposed, and that some mosquitoes in your area may be carrying CVV. It does not prove that CVV is the cause of your flock/herd problem.
- There is currently no treatment for CVV infection, in sheep or goats, and no vaccine.

To avoid problems in your flock

It's tough to avoid mosquitoes during breeding season! That said, you could try to minimize your animals' access to standing water (where mosquitoes could breed) for the first third of their pregnancy.

- While CVV seems to only be transmitted to people via mosquito bites, many other infectious diseases may be spread to humans during intervening at lambing/kidding, handling aborted fetuses/ caring for a sick animal. It's important to protect yourself and your family by wearing disposable gloves when delivering a lamb/kid or caring for sick livestock. Pregnant women should not be assisting in lambing/kidding as other disease in sheep/goats can also cause abortion in women.

