Western Canadian Animal Health Network

WECAHN SMALLHOLDER NETWORK PRODUCER SUMMARY

April - June 2025

The WeCAHN Smallholder Network held its quarterly meeting on September 19th, 2025, to discuss smallholder animal health from April to June 2025.

1) Overview

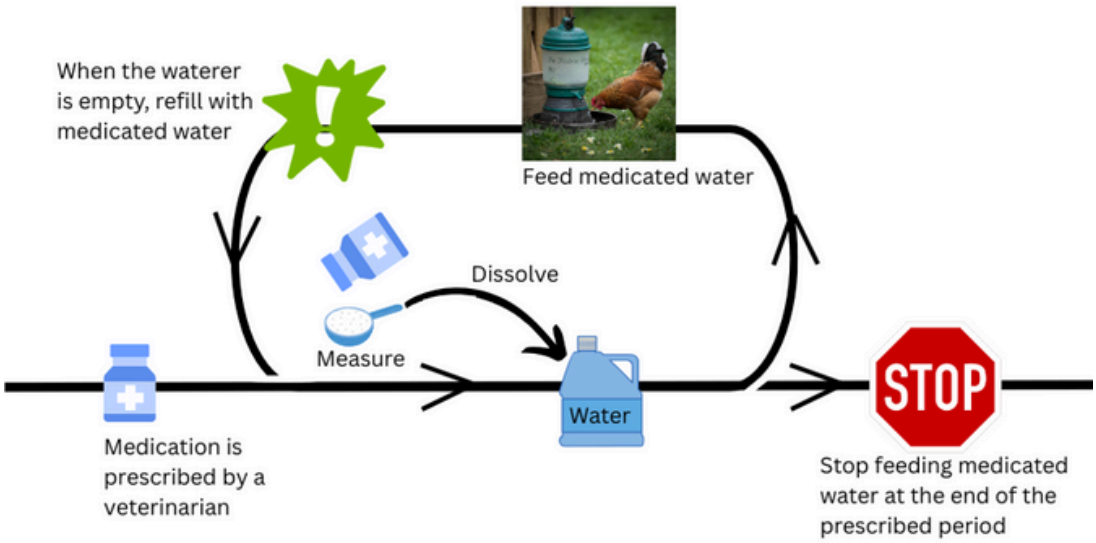
Data sources in this report include:

- Clinical Impressions Surveys completed by network practitioners.
- Data shared by western veterinary diagnostic laboratories: Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) laboratory, Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), and University of Calgary College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).
- Scan: smallholder surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

2) Key diagnoses and cases

i) A small flock experienced illness and reduced egg production following treatment for coccidiosis and deworming. Follow-up identified mistakes in water access, treatment timing, and medication continuity.

- Example of the instructions for the preparation of medicated water:



ii) Two-week-old broiler breeders had multidrug-resistant *E. coli.* Though less common than in past decades, these infections still occur, especially in the first week post-hatch. With timely treatment, the flock recovered.

iii) *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) was detected at a duck balut farm. Because balut production is not regulated, compensation is not available for depopulating flocks. The producer is considering antibiotic treatment and vaccination and improving biosecurity while balut sales continue under proper labelling to ensure safe consumption.

iv) Lambs from a start-up flock of 20 ewes experienced sudden neurological illness death presumably due to Thiamine deficiency. The producers planned to expand the flock.

v) A sheep flock experiencing weekly losses and neurological signs was initially treated for listeriosis without improvement. Lab testing confirmed salt toxicity or water deprivation, showing how similar symptoms can stem from different causes and why veterinary diagnosis is important to guide correct treatment.

3) Syndromic surveillance

- **Small poultry flocks:** Clinical impression surveys (CIS) indicated that most conditions, including bacterial infections and coccidiosis, were reported at low to moderate frequency and were generally stable or decreasing. Laboratory data showed elevated diagnoses of colibacillosis and septicemia at PDS, while other major diseases were less frequently detected.
- **Small flocks of small ruminants:** A companion goat was positive for caseous lymphadenitis, and a young pet goat was diagnosed with coccidiosis and copper toxicity. Abortions of unknown cause in commercial goats were identified more often this quarter at PDS.

4) Scan

1. Marek's disease and colibacillosis were the most frequent diagnoses from Alberta's NQ/NC poultry disease investigations program.
2. A litter size of two lambs is more sustainable and economical long-term (Van Donkersgoed, 2025, CVJ).
3. The US CDC completed their investigation of multistate *Salmonella* outbreaks linked to small flock poultry (LINK).
4. Lumpy skin disease was confirmed for the first time in Italy (WOAH WAHIS, June 21), France (WOAH WAHIS, June 26) and Spain (WOAH WAHIS, October 3).
5. HPAI in dairy cattle remains a concern in the US, with continued milk testing for viral presence (LINK). Canada has not detected HPAI in cattle (LINK).
6. HPAI has been recently detected in commercial poultry flocks in most Canadian provinces (CFIA Investigations and orders)

5) Takeaways:

1. A recent case showed how miscommunication can affect treatment success. If something isn't clear, ask for clarification. It's always better to speak up than risk a mistake that could affect your animals.
2. Building a strong foundation in animal husbandry, like clean housing, balanced nutrition, and early colostrum for newborns, is necessary before expanding your flock or herd. These basics go a long way in preventing issues and setting your animals up for healthy, productive growth.
3. With wild birds migrating this fall, watch for signs of bird flu. Protect your flock by preventing contact with wild birds. CFIA webpage "Protect your flock from bird flu"

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