Western Canadian Animal Health Network

WECAHN SMALLHOLDER NETWORK PRODUCER REPORT

APRIL - JUNE 2026

The WeCAHN Smallholder Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on Sept 25th, 2026, to discuss animal health events occurring from April to June 2026 with veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, public veterinarians, 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, University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM) and, for the first time, the British Columbia Animal Health Centre (AHC).
3. Scan: smallholder surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

2) Interesting Cases

i) Case Study: Listeriosis in a buck

- A one-year-old pet buck was paddling, laying on his side and struggling to breathe.
- Testing confirmed listeriosis in the brain, along with pneumonia.
- Liver testing found vitamin A and copper deficiencies and unusually high vitamin E levels.

ii) Case study: Fused joints and cleft palate in lambs

- Twin Suffolk lambs were born with stiff, fused joints, no purposeful muscle movement and had difficulty breathing.
- One lamb had a split roof of the mouth and underdeveloped lungs.
- Possible causes include inherited conditions, infections during pregnancy (e.g. certain viruses), or exposure to poisonous plants.

iii) Case study: Severe intestinal disease in a lamb

- An 11-day-old bottle-fed lamb became severely weak and developed bloating, low body temperature and difficulty swallowing.
- The lamb was suspected of not receiving colostrum after birth, and the ewe was unvaccinated.
- Post-mortem examination found severe intestinal inflammation, bleeding and tissue damage, along with pneumonia and suspected infection throughout the body.



3) Syndromic Surveillance

Important information

Clinical impression surveys

Quarterly surveys are completed by network practitioners.

Answers:

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 Decreasingdetection 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.

Small poultry flocks

Clinical impressions survey and laboratory diagnostic results

- **Respiratory disease:** Infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) ranged from **Never** to **Rarely**, and *Mycoplasma*-related disease ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.
- **Digestive disease:** Coccidiosis ranged from **Never** to **Rarely**, while peritonitis ranged from **Never** to **Very frequently**.
- **Reproductive disease:** Ovarian cancer ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.
- **Multisystemic disease:** Early mortality, aggression, bacterial septicemia in laying birds, Marek's disease and predator-related losses were reported from **Never** to **Commonly**.
- **Musculoskeletal disease:** Bacterial lameness ranged from **Never** to **Commonly**.

Note: Changes in reported categories may reflect more small-flock owners seeking veterinary care. Egg yolk peritonitis and infectious peritonitis have different causes, and survey questions have been updated to distinguish them.



At the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM), diseases diagnosed included bacterial rhinitis and adenocarcinoma (type of cancer) in backyard chickens.

At the BC Animal Health Centre (AHC), there were many diagnoses in small flocks of poultry. Diseases of the respiratory system included ILT, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG), infectious coryza (caused by *Avibacterium paragallinarum*) and Blackhead disease. Digestive diagnoses included fatty liver, hepatitis, and bacterial infections. Other findings included adenocarcinoma, lymphosarcoma, Marek's disease, septicemia, wasting and others.

At Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), a young broiler chicken was diagnosed with right-sided heart failure, fluid buildup and possible salt poisoning. One goose tested positive for influenza A (H5-positive, H7-negative). Hepatitis diagnoses in broilers increased above the upper control limit at PDS; causes included unknown factors and *E. coli*.

At the MB Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS), Marek's disease was diagnosed in three chickens. *Enterococcus cecorum* isolations increased toward the upper control limit.

Salmonella ser. Enteritidis was detected in chickens at multiple laboratories.

Small Herds of Small Ruminants

Clinical Impressions Survey and laboratory diagnostic results

- **Respiratory disease:** Pneumonia in young and adult animals was **Never** reported.
- **Digestive disease:** Johne's disease, strongylosis, and haemonchosis were reported **Rarely**. Neonatal diarrhea, non-parasitic diarrhea, and coccidiosis were reported **Decreasing** compared to last quarter.
- **Reproductive disease:** Mastitis, congenital defects, and pregnancy toxemia were **Rarely** reported.
- **Multisystemic disease:** Caseous lymphadenitis was **Rarely** reported and **Decreasing**.
- **Neurologic disease:** Listeriosis and polioencephalomalacia were **Never** reported.
- **Skin disease:** Lice were **Rarely** reported and **Decreasing**.
- **Musculoskeletal disease:** Other causes of lameness were **Rarely** reported.
- **Urinary disease:** Urolithiasis was **Never** reported and **Decreasing**.

At UCVM, a pet goat was diagnosed with listeriosis (caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*). An abortion investigation in a pet sheep did not find a cause. An abortion with a developmental abnormality was also reported in a Suffolk sheep from a small producer.

At AHC, a young goat with a birth defect had pneumonia. A sheep died of asphyxiation (blocked airway). Bacterial infection of the intestines, bloat and copper poisoning were diagnosed in sheep and goats.

At PDS, two companion sheep tested positive for *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies paratuberculosis, the cause of Johne's disease. Sheep hepatitis cases increased at PDS across several causes, including parasites, fatty liver and copper poisoning.

Across western laboratories, small ruminant lentiviruses, including caprine arthritis-encephalitis and ovine progressive pneumonia viruses (CAEV and OPP), were not frequently detected. Caseous lymphadenitis remained a persistent finding in sheep and goats. Abortions of unknown cause were commonly reported in sheep and goats.

Small Herds of Swine

Clinical Impressions Survey and Laboratory Diagnostic Results

- **Digestive disease:** Intestinal parasites ranged from **Never** to **Rarely**.
- **Respiratory disease:** Coughing, pneumonia and other respiratory disease was **Never** reported.
- **Musculoskeletal disease:** Degenerative joint disease causing lameness ranged from **Never** to **Rarely**.
- **Dermatological disease:** Skin conditions, including external parasites and greasy pig disease, ranged from **Never** to **Rarely**.

At AHC, a smallholder pig was diagnosed with pneumonia and tested positive for porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRS). Another pig had bacterial and viral meningitis associated. A pig with an adrenal gland tumor also had uterine adenocarcinoma.



4) Scan and Other Updates

- WeCAHN Poultry Network: Severe ILT in Alberta backyard flocks and severe Marek's disease in BC.
- WeCAHN Small Ruminant Network: Iodine deficiency in a mixed herd caused enlarged thyroid glands (goiter) and abortions. Supplementation with iodized salt and species-appropriate minerals resolved the problem.
- In a small Manitoba operation, PED virus remained in manure lagoons for over 18 months. The goal is to confirm the virus is no longer detected and eliminate the infection before winter.
- Classical scrapie detection in Oregon, USA, in June 2026 (WOAH WAHIS)
- Vesicular Stomatitis Virus update (VSV) (USDA-APHIS), see Sept 3, 2026, Situation Report
- No HPAI H5N1 has been detected in Canadian dairy cattle (CFIA). The first confirmed detection in poultry of the fall season occurred on September 10, 2026, in Manitoba (CFIA Investigations and orders)
- Internationally, HPAI H5N1 remained widespread in U.S. dairy cattle (LINK).
- First detection of Shamonda-like virus, a novel virus, in central Europe, in cattle, alpacas, sheep and goats and in horses with neurologic disease. (beaconbio.org)
- A classical bovine spongiform encephalopathy case was confirmed in Scotland (LINK)
- Novel parvovirus in piglets with bulging eyes in the Netherlands (Tobias et al. 2026).
- New World screwworm was confirmed in Texas (ABC News), and New Mexico. See screwworm.gov





Producer Takeaways

1. Lambs and goat kids born with stiff or fused joints can have several possible causes. Finding the cause may require additional testing and costs, so discuss the options with your veterinarian.
2. Make sure all newborn animals receive enough colostrum soon after birth to help protect them against disease.
3. More small-flock owners may be seeking veterinary care, which could explain increased reporting of diseases affecting multiple body systems in poultry. This does not necessarily mean these diseases are becoming more common.

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