Western Canadian Animal Health Network

WECAHN SMALLHOLDER NETWORK PRODUCER SUMMARY

APRIL - JUNE 2026

The WeCAHN Smallholder Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on Sept 25th, 2026, to discuss animal health events from April to June 2026. The session brought together veterinarians, diagnosticians, researchers, public veterinarians, 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), University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU) and, for the first time, the British Columbia Animal Health Centre (AHC).



1) Interesting Cases

- **Case study:** A one-year-old buck was paddling, laying on his side and struggling to breathe. He was diagnosed with listeriosis and vitamin/mineral deficiencies.
- **Case study:** Twin Suffolk lambs were born with fused joints and no purposeful muscle movement. One had a cleft palate. Possible causes include inherited conditions, infections during pregnancy or exposure to poisonous plants.
- **Case study:** An 11-day-old lamb developed severe weakness, bloating and low body temperature. It was suspected the lamb did not receive colostrum after birth.

2) Syndromic Surveillance

- **Small poultry flocks:** Clinical impressions surveys (CIS) reported stable diseases. Laboratory findings included infections of the respiratory and digestive tracts. Marek's disease, infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) and *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG) were identified.
- **Small flocks of small ruminants:** CIS reported stable diagnoses. A sheep died of asphyxiation (blocked airway). Abortions of unknown cause were commonly reported in sheep and goats.
- **Small herds of swine:** Respiratory and digestive tract disease was reported never to rarely. A smallholder pig had pneumonia and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS).

3) 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.
- 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)
- 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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