

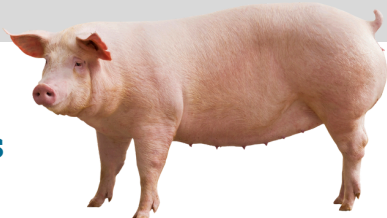


The WeCAHN Smallholder Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on November 29th, 2024, to discuss the animal health events occurring from July to September 2024, with veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, and industry representatives in attendance.

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 Services Diagnostic Laboratory (VDSL), Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), and University of Calgary College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).
3. Scan: smallholder surveillance reported by other sources of networks.



Interesting cases

1) Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is present in small poultry flocks and small herds

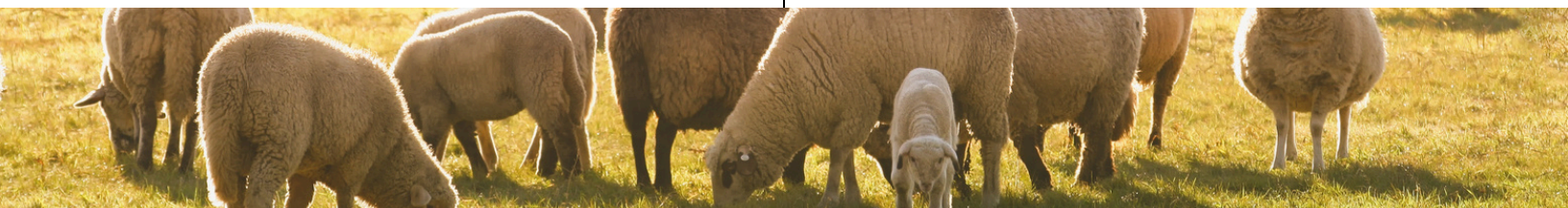
- Two pigs from a smallholder farm in Oregon tested positive for HPAI. Three other pigs were negative ([LINK](#) to news article and USDA [LINK](#)).
 - The pigs were tested after HPAI was identified in poultry with the same environment and water source. One of the pigs ate a dead wild bird.
 - Poultry and pigs were euthanized. Sheep and goats at the farm were under surveillance.
- HPAI in BC, AB and QC were detected in non-commercial poultry farms affected ([LINK](#)). ([LINK](#)).

Take-home messages:

1. Keep pigs and birds separate. Pigs are opportunistic eaters and will eat dead wild birds if they have the chance to do so. A pig that eats dead wild birds may get infected with HPAI.
2. HPAI is present in small poultry flocks in Canada this year. Infected birds may:
 - a. “have a drop in egg production, many of which are soft-shelled or shell-less
 - b. diarrhea
 - c. hemorrhages (bruising) on the hock
 - d. high and sudden mortality rate
 - e. quietness and extreme depression
 - f. swelling of the skin under the eyes
 - g. wattles and combs become swollen and congested”
 - h. Contact your veterinarian if your poultry is sick. ([LINK](#) to information on avian influenza and [LINK](#) to “How to prevent and detect disease in small flocks and pet birds”)

2) 7-year-old male mixed breed goat died after a bladder rupture

- The goat was quiet, losing weight and straining to pee for 2 weeks. At the vet clinic, the goat was depressed and not able to stand. Euthanasia was performed.
- The goat’s bladder ruptured, most likely after a bladder stone moved into the urethra and blocked the passage of urine.
- Stones in the bladder or urinary tract (urolithiasis) are a common problem for sheep and goats.
- **Take-home message:** A male goat or sheep that is straining to pass urine or cannot pass urine is an emergency. Please contact your veterinarian.



Syndromic surveillance

Small poultry flocks

Laboratory diagnoses

At the Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS) laboratory, there was an increase in the uptake of the [Saskatchewan Small Flock Poultry Surveillance Program](#). There were four 16-week-old poultry submitted with low levels of vitamin A. One broiler chicken was positive for gallid herpesvirus 1 (Infectious laryngotracheitis).

At the Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDSL) laboratory, there was one diagnosis of Marek's disease in 4 chickens in non-hatchery poultry (most likely from small poultry flocks).

At the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU), there was a 1-week-old turkey submitted from a small poultry flock that died of aspergillosis. An adult female chicken was diagnosed with lymphoma and was positive for avian herpesvirus type 2, or Marek's Disease Virus.



Swine

Clinical impression surveys

Neurologic disease was reported **Never** (2/3) to **Rarely** = 1-2 times per month (1/3).

Comment: A practitioner saw a small lot of baby pigs with signs of meningitis (e.g., paddling, convulsing, circling) and suspected *Streptococcus suis* as the causative agent.

Take-home message: If baby pigs are acting abnormally, contact your veterinarian for assistance.

Scan

WeCAHN Poultry Network (commercial poultry)

1) Avian metapneumovirus (aMPV), which can cause severe respiratory disease, was identified in commercial poultry flocks in Canada.

- Avian metapneumovirus was found in wild birds in Canada.
- **Take-home message:** Separate farmed and pet poultry from wild birds to limit sharing viruses such as aMPV.

Alberta update

New [Small-scale swine disease investigations program](#):

- The main goal is the early detection of provincially and federally reportable porcine diseases:
 - African Swine Fever virus (ASF) – if you suspect ASF, contact the CFIA immediately.
 - Coronaviruses (Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea – PED, Porcine Delta Coronavirus – PDCoV, Transmissible Gastroenteritis virus – TGE)
 - Salmonella
 - Influenza virus
- “This project can help producers directly or private veterinarians who refer cases from small-scale swine producers. Not all pigs from small-scale swine herds will be accepted for testing. The herd’s symptoms must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - sudden increase in death.
 - sudden increase in abortions (pregnancy loss).
 - illness manifested by septicemia (red to purple discolouration of the ears, abdomen and sometimes legs) leading to death.
 - increased number of pigs having diarrhea, leading to death.
 - increased rate of difficulty in breathing and coughing, leading to death.”
- Swine carcasses can be sent to Edmonton, Airdrie and Lethbridge, but cannot be accepted at Fairview.
- The Premises identification number is mandatory ([LINK](#) for application).

Manitoba update

- The MB extension veterinarian and livestock specialist are creating a euthanasia workshop for small-scale swine herds. Details on the workshop will be shared once they are finalized.
- They have a working group with individuals from the Manitoba Pork Council, Squeal on Pigs, Prairie Swine Centre and MB Agriculture to develop a plan to reach small-scale swine herds to share sound information.

Meeting takeaways

1. HPAI and avian metapneumovirus are present in Canada. “Follow 5 basic rules in the day-to-day care of your birds to reduce the risks posed by harmful diseases.
 - a. Prevent contact with wild birds and other animals
 - b. Clean, clean and clean
 - c. Spot the signs and report early
 - d. Limit exposure to visitors
 - e. Keep new birds separate when entering your flock” ([LINK](#) to CFIA website)
2. There are multiple programs to support smallholder farmers in the event of disease in their animals. Contact your veterinarian and look into these programs:



Group of small flocks/herds	BC	AB	SK	MB
Poultry	Disease Detection Program for Smallholders	Non-quota or non-commercial poultry disease investigations	Small Flock Poultry Surveillance Program	Small Flock Avian Influenza Program
Small ruminants	Disease Detection Program for Smallholders			
Swine	Disease Detection Program for Smallholders	Small-scale swine disease investigations	Small Holder Swine Health Surveillance Program	

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