

Ontario Animal Health Network (OAHN)—Small Ruminant Network Producer Report for the period July 1st to September 30th, 2014 (3rd quarter)

WHAT IS OAHN?

The Ontario Animal Health Network is a new program, focusing on early disease detection in animals so as to identify trends in animal health issues that require action. To do this, the program has created expert veterinary networks for each species or commodity. The **Small Ruminant Expert Network (SREN)** is comprised of six veterinarians representing the Ontario Veterinary College, OMAFRA, the Animal Health Laboratory at the University of Guelph and three private practitioners each representing a geographical area of the province.

Veterinarians who provide service to small ruminant producers are surveyed quarterly about the diseases and issues seen in practice. Results from this survey, along with a summary of sheep and goat laboratory results, are discussed by the SREN to **detect important trends and emerging animal health issues**. This information is distributed as a summary report with supportive educational materials to small ruminant veterinarians. A Producer Report, highlighting one disease / issue noted in the survey will also be distributed to sheep and goat producers. The overall goal of the network is to improve the health of the Ontario small ruminant flock and herd.

TOP 3 DISEASES / ISSUES OF CONCERN* - LAB DATA AND VETERINARY SURVEY (Q3 REPORT 2014)

*RESULTS SIMILAR FOR SHEEP AND GOATS

Young stock (<1 year old):

- gastrointestinal parasitism
(includes coccidiosis and haemonchosis)
- **pneumonia**
- sudden death

Adult stock (>1 year old):

- haemonchosis
- wasting/thin animals
- pneumonia

LAMB / KID PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is common in sheep and goats most often affecting young stock. Usually it is caused by bacteria, and less commonly viruses or parasites (lungworm), but the **level of disease is determined by other stressors** which lower the animal's ability to fight infection. These include: inadequate colostrum intake, poor nutrition, chilling, sudden changes in temperature or extreme weather conditions, overcrowding, poor barn ventilation (ammonia, high humidity, drafts), mixing groups, weaning, transportation, and other concurrent infections (e.g. coccidiosis).

Sick lambs and kids are difficult to pick out, so it is **important to identify signs early** through frequent observation without disturbing the group (e.g. from outside the pen). Pull animals which are **dull** (less active and alert), **not eating** (gaunt, poor rumen fill) and take their temperature. Presence of a **high fever** ($\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C}$; $\geq 104^{\circ}\text{F}$) is strongly suggestive of pneumonia. **Nasal discharge and coughing aren't always seen**. If pneumonia isn't detected early, breathing becomes laboured and the animal more depressed. Severe bacterial pneumonia can kill young stock in as little as 12 hours.

Develop treatment plans, including reduction of stressors, with your veterinarian. **Antibiotics are only effective if used in the early stages of disease**. There are currently no respiratory vaccines labelled for sheep and goats in Canada. Always follow antibiotic dosages and withdrawal times as provided by your vet but **antibiotics should not be used in place of good management**.

Pneumonia can result in considerable financial losses due to poor weight gain, culling of chronically affected animals, treatment costs and death losses. Good management, along with early detection and treatment, will help to minimize the effects of pneumonia in your flock or herd.